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AGRICULTURAL SETTLEMENT IN THE SOUTH PEACE RIVER AREA

by

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A THESIS

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled Agricultural Settlement in the South Peace River Area, submitted by Carl Joseph Tracie in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Abstract

The central problem of this thesis is the identification of certain broad factors that were responsible for agricultural settlement generally and for farm site selection specifically in the South Peace River area of Alberta. An additional problem has been to determine if these factors have changed through time.

The factors found to be important in the general process of settlement were: "negatively" - land cost, physical conditions, national conditions and discouraging future; and, "positively" - the invitation of the land, advertising, and influence of relatives. In addition the "facilitative" factors of access and government land policies and their effect on settlement are discussed.

In the selection of specific farm sites the factors found to be important included: availability of land, farm inheritance, location of relatives, and physical conditions. Most general settlement factors varied less through time than from area to area. The same generally was true of the specific site factors, although the tendency to vary from area to area was greater.

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Chapter I

Introduction

The Problem

Settlement geography is concerned with the processes, patterns and forms of the initial and subsequent human occupancy of a region, and with the physical, social, and economic factors that influence these processes, patterns, and forms. Isaiah Bowman has said, "No intelligent immigration policy can be formed by a country having unsettled potential farmland of good quality without knowing under what conditions people can be induced to go upon the land."¹ While the present study does not attempt to direct or influence immigration policy-making, it does deal specifically with "knowing under what conditions people can be induced to go upon the land". Thus this study outlines the patterns and forms of settlement in the study region, but focuses on the factors responsible for the settlement processes.

In its broadest sense, this study attempts to add to the general body of knowledge encompassed by settlement geography by identifying general settlement factors that may be compared and contrasted with settlement factors found to be operating in other agricultural regions. More specifically it attempts to clarify and account for the settlement process in this particular region by the identification of the factors responsible for the farmer's initial move to the Peace River region and for his choice of a specific farm location. Finally the study attempts

¹I. Bowman, The Pioneer Fringe, A.G.S. Special Publication No. 13, Commonwealth Press, Worcester, 1931, p. 86.

to determine if the importance of specific factors changes throughout the time range of settlement and whether it changes from area to area. The core of the thesis is thus concerned with three basic questions: Why did farmers move to the Peace region? Why did they choose a specific farm location? Have these factors changed in importance through time, and do they change from area to area?

The Area

As an area for the study of these problems, the Peace River region has at least two advantages. First, as an agricultural area, it was and is geographically separated from the rest of settled Alberta by almost two hundred miles of non-agricultural land. Unlike most other areas, local agricultural settlement therefore can be isolated from those influences on initial settlement of land resulting from steady agricultural expansion outward from a developed area. Secondly, agricultural settlement in this region has taken place within the last sixty years. Some of the original settlers are still alive to provide reliable, first-hand information on initial settlement factors. This recency of settlement also facilitates the study of the processes and patterns of settlement in a developing area.

In view of the size of the Peace River region and the time factor involved, three study areas were chosen to represent the types of agricultural settlement to be found in the Peace.² All the areas chosen

²The phrase "the Peace" in this study refers to the Peace River region generally and not to the river of that name.

are located in the south³ of the Alberta portion of the Peace River area: the Lake Saskatoon township (72-8-W6th), approximately sixteen miles west of Grande Prairie; the Lymburn township (73-12-W6th), approximately 45 miles north-west of Grande Prairie; and the Bonanza township (80-12-W6th), in the north-west corner of this southern section of the Peace. These represent respectively, early and successful agricultural settlement, early and less successful settlement, and relatively recent settlement. The existence of a very early settlement centre in the Lake Saskatoon township also influenced the choice of that area.

The Methods

Since the major emphasis of this study was upon identification of those factors responsible for the choice of the region and the choice of a specific farm location, personal interview was the basic tool for securing information. The questionnaire (a copy of which is found in Appendix I) was completed by sixty-six farmers. In some cases the farmer was able to give information on his parents' decision to come to the Peace so that the number of responses is higher (eighty-six) than the actual number of interviews conducted. All the interviews attempted were completed, although in a few cases there was some initial hesitancy in answering the questions. Most farmers were interviewed at their homes, but a number were interviewed as they worked in the field. It was found that in six instances the farmer actually was resident outside the study area. Many such non-resident farmers who

³The focus of the study is on this southern area which is bounded on the north by the Peace River, on the east by the Smoky River and on the south by the Wapiti River. The west boundary is the Alberta-British Columbia border.

owned land in the study area were missed, as were a few others who were not at home.

Information on the physical and historical characteristics of the areas was collected from government and municipal maps and records, published and unpublished books, articles, and papers and extended taped interviews with fifteen old-timers of the areas (whose entry dates into the Peace ranged from 1904 to 1915).

The Scope

Several questions come to mind regarding the results of this study. To what extent are the responses in the study area indicative of the settlement and locational factors of the Peace region? To what areas can the identified factors be applied?

It is impossible to establish statistically (i.e. by farm size, improved acreage etc.) how representative the study areas are because the statistical units are too large, and because the areas were chosen to be anomalies and not averages. However, the study areas do span the entire range of local settlement in time and further, are representative of most of the local types of agricultural settlement. The general physical features, soil, and drainage conditions of the Peace are well represented by these three areas as well.

Emphasis in this study is placed on the identification of the more important settlement factors, and, while their relative importance is indicated, there is no attempt to rate them absolutely. It is reasonable to suppose then, that the factors identified in this study will be found to be important throughout the entire Peace region. The degree of importance of each factor will probably vary as one moves

from locality to locality throughout the region, however, especially in the case of specific farm location choices.

Chapter II

Physical Geography

General Location

The Peace River region of Alberta is an ill-defined area in the northwest sector of the province. In general terms it occupies the area north of the 55th north parallel of latitude and west of the 115th west meridian of longitude. More specifically it is the occupied section of this larger area (See Map 1). This section is bounded on three sides by terrain inhospitable to agricultural settlement, but into which such settlement is penetrating in more favored areas. It is bounded on the west side by the Alberta-British Columbia boundary. It is the southern portion of this inhabited area (see footnote p.3) on which this study focuses and the general physical and historical sections deal more specifically with this smaller area.

Relief and Drainage

The Peace River region is located on the east limb of the Alberta Syncline.¹ Structurally and geologically it is related to the plains area of Alberta,² indeed, on a very small scale, plains similar to those found in central and southern Alberta are found here.

¹The Alberta Syncline is a large structural basin created by warping of the strata associated with the orogenesis of the Rocky Mountains. Its main axis approximately parallels the Rockies.

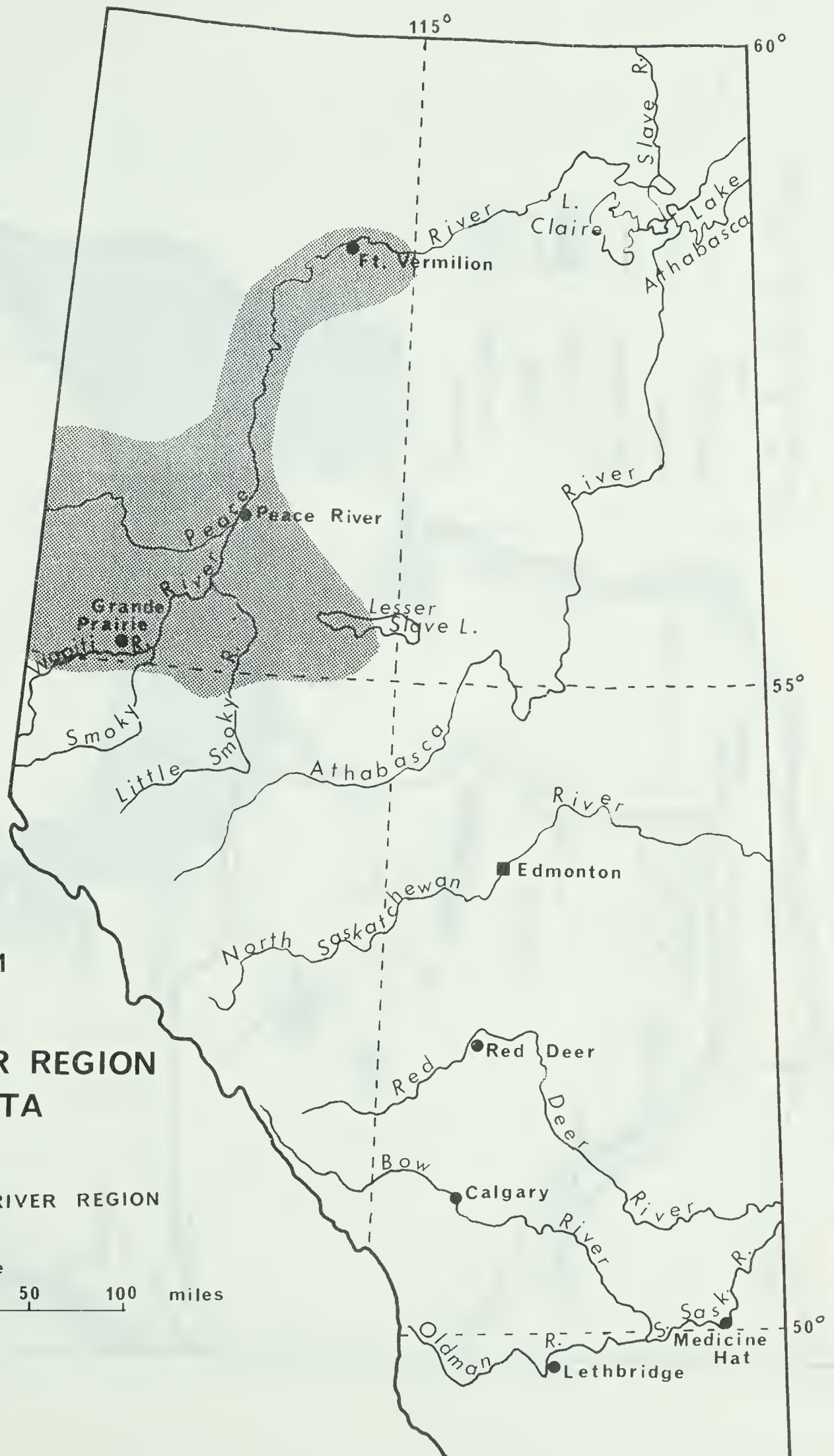
²R.L. Rutherford, , Geology and Water Resources in Parts of the Peace River and Grande Prairie Districts, Alberta Research Council, Report 21, Edmonton, 1930, 68 pp.

MAP 1
PEACE RIVER REGION
ALBERTA



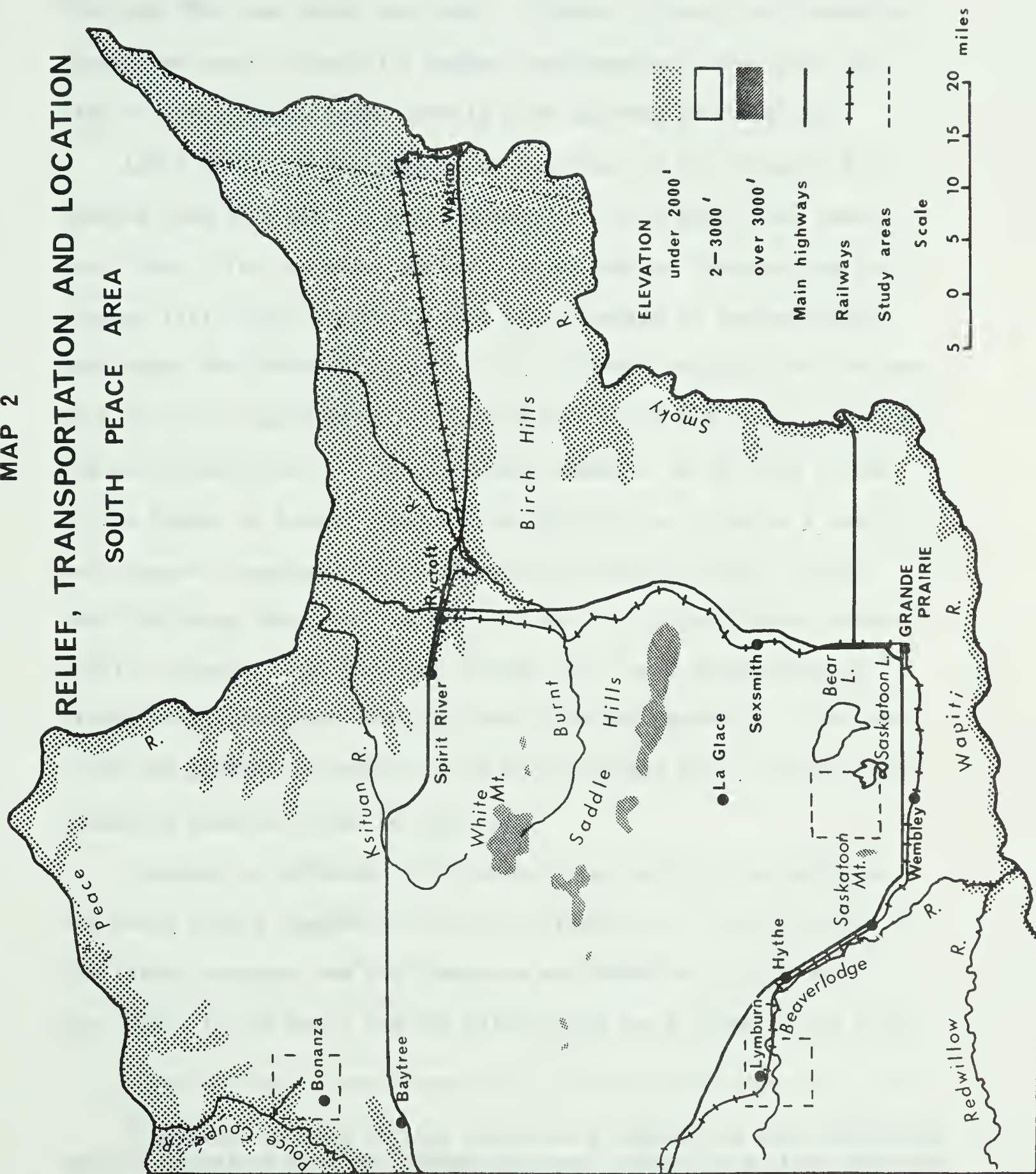
PEACE RIVER REGION

Scale
50 0 50 100 miles



MAP 2

RELIEF, TRANSPORTATION AND LOCATION SOUTH PEACE AREA



The whole area is a plateau with a general elevation of between 2000 and 3000 feet above sea level. Glacial, fluvial and lacustrine deposition upon horizontally bedded limestones and sandstones give rise to a relatively level terrain with few rock outcroppings.

Local relief in the area is in the order of two thousand feet, ranging from 3200 feet on White Mountain to 1200 feet along some of the rivers. The two most prominent topographical features are the remnant till plains that rise from three hundred to twelve hundred feet above the surrounding area, and the deeply incised river valleys that are cut as much as eight hundred feet below the plateau surface. The most significant of the till plain remnants is the band formed by the Saddle or Burnt Hills and the Birch Hills. This is a zone of more rugged topography which separates the Spirit River Prairie³ from the Grande Prairie. Outliers of this till plain occur sporadically throughout the area and include such local prominences as Kleskun Hill, Saskatoon Mountain and Blueberry Mountain. These outliers are generally somewhat lower than the main range of hills, but Saskatoon Mountain rises to 3100 feet.

Drainage is effected in the area by the Wapiti, the Smoky and the Peace Rivers together with their tributaries. Worthy of note in the latter category are the Simonette and Redwillow in the south, the Burnt in the east, and the Ksituan and Pouce Coupe in the north.

³"Prairie" is used in this thesis as a vegetation term indicating natural grassland with few clumps of trees. There is a close relationship of this type of cover to fairly level terrain however.

The deeply incised nature of these rivers and of the lower reaches of their tributaries is both advantageous and disadvantageous: it makes for good drainage on land near these rivers and streams but also slumping and erosion make much of the land adjoining them unfit for any type of agricultural activity. There is also the problem of the lowered water table near these rivers; of the three study areas, Bonanza is the only one suffering from this problem. Dugouts⁴ to catch and conserve precipitation are common in this area.

The most significant aspect of the terrain with regard to settlement has been the prairie or parkland areas. (See Map 3) They occupied elevations of 2300 feet in the south west to 2000 feet in the north west. These areas are level to very gently undulating and were, for the most part, associated with the ponding of glacial lake Peace against the north-eastward retreating Continental ice sheet. By far the most significant of these prairie areas was the Grande Prairie (formerly known as the Buffalo Plains), a non-continuous prairie that stretched from the Smoky River to within twelve miles of the Alberta-British Columbia border and bounded on the north and south by the Saddle Hills and the Wapiti River respectively. The second largest in this southern area was the Spirit River Prairie that extended northward and south-eastward from Spirit River. An extension of the Pouce Coupe prairie reached into the north-west corner in the Bonanza

⁴Dugouts are excavations eight to sixteen and more feet deep and with variable areal dimensions, usually about 20 by 40 feet.

area, but it was restricted in extent. Drainage is frequently poor in these very level areas; broad, shallow lakes and considerable ponding are common.

Climate

The climate of this region is distinctly Continental with short, relatively hot summers, and long, cold winters. Occasionally, these winters are punctuated by chinooks that bring sudden, short-term moderation. Local variations in climate can be quite extreme; temperature and precipitation, especially in the last five years, can vary greatly in localities only a few miles apart, and, in extreme cases, only a few hundred yards apart. This is especially true of temperature differences. Although this region is north of the main agricultural areas of Western Canada, the climate is not significantly more severe than that of central Alberta or of southern Manitoba.

Precipitation in some areas of the Peace is marginal for cereal grain production (Grande Prairie's eighteen-year average is 17.07 inches annually) but the efficacy of the soil moisture reserves and the concentration of precipitation in the growing season (see Table I) tend to alleviate this inadequacy. Therefore, in most years, precipitation is adequate for grain production.

Of more urgency, especially in the early days, was the matter of the length of the growing season and the occurrence of early and late killing frosts. It was long known that the flats along the larger rivers would support agriculture because of the ameliorating effect of the river. The upland surface was generally not so regarded, how-

ever, because of the frequent occurrence of summer killing frosts. Both William Ogilvie and James Macoun reported frost damage in July. Greater air circulation due to the clearing of the land, and the development of early maturing strains of grain have improved the situation, and today boundaries of successful agriculture in the Peace are determined more by soil characteristics than by climatic factors. Although this region is almost 300 miles north of Lacombe, its frost free season (over 29°F) is longer (Beaverlodge 130 days; Grande Prairie 112 days; Lacombe 105 days).⁵ Also, faster maturation of the crop occurs due to the increased solar insolation of the long summer days of the higher latitudes.

The following tables serve both to give more specific climatic information about the area, and to give substance to the foregoing broad statements regarding climate.

⁵W.E. Bowser, T.W. Peters, and J.D. Newton, Soil Survey of the Red Deer Sheet, Alberta Soil Survey Report No. 16, Edmonton, 1951, 86 p.

Table I

Temperature and Precipitation Records - Grande Prairie and Beaverlodge⁶

Month	Grande Prairie (19 years)		Beaverlodge (48 years)	
	Temperature Mean Mo. (°F)	Precipitation (inches)	Temperature Mean Mo. (°F)	Precipitation (inches)
August	58.6	1.99	57.7	2.04
September	49.9	1.25	50.2	1.58
October	38.1	1.14	39.8	1.25
Previous Fall		---- 4.38		---- 4.87
November	23.3	1.08	23.7	1.29
December	9.5	1.33	12.8	1.15
January	5.6	1.35	8.4	1.19
February	8.6	1.37	10.1	1.07
March	20.4	.74	20.8	1.03
Winter		---- 5.87		---- 5.73
April	37.3	.82	36.8	.87
May	50.3	1.52	49.2	1.60
June	56.4	2.00	55.4	2.01
July	60.7	2.48	59.3	2.31
Spring and Growing Season		---- 6.82		---- 6.79
Total Mean Ann.	34.9	17.07	Mean Ann. 35.4	17.39

Table II

Frost and Growing Season Records⁷

Location	Years Averaged	Growing Season (days over 29°F)	Frost-free Period (days over 32°F)
Grande Prairie	9	112	95
Beaverlodge	36	130	97

⁶Canada, Department of Transport, Meteorological Branch, Monthly Record, January-December, 1965.

⁷W. Odynsky and A. Wynnyk, Soil Survey of the Grande Prairie and Sturgeon Lake Sheets, Research Council of Alberta, Report No. 74, Edmonton, 1956, 111 p.

Using a more recent source,⁸ the frost-free period at Beaverlodge averaged as 101 days over 43 years, a significant change in only seven years. From this same source, the average date of the last killing frost (28°F or lower) is May 9 and the average first killing frost is September 19, giving a total length of 133 days. The frost-free period (between killing frosts) at Beaverlodge has ranged from 70 days in 1916 to 172 days in 1942.

Soils

One of the striking characteristics of the soils in the area under study is their variation both from area to area and locally. Though the main soil group is the Grey Wooded, there are large areas of black and degraded black soils. For the most part they are clay or silty loam associated with the coverage of glacial Lake Peace. These soils are developed on lacustrine or lacustro-till surfaces and occupy the most level areas. To the north, south and west of the Grande Prairie-Beaverlodge area where the black-degraded black soil is preponderant, one rapidly progresses into the grey wooded soils associated with a rough terrain and a till or alluvial parent material. These soils are less fertile and tend to be stony, gravelly or sandy in composition. This is especially true on ridges and hilltops, even in the black soil regions.

⁸W. Odynsky. et.al., Soil Survey of the Beaverlodge and Blueberry Mountain Sheets, Research Council of Alberta, Report No. 20, Edmonton, 1961, 123 p.

It must be remembered that these are very general statements; soil type and composition can vary significantly from one part of a quarter section to another. One of the errors in the initial settlement of the area and one of the main factors in drawing the settlers here was the belief that the soil was uniformly fertile over the entire region.

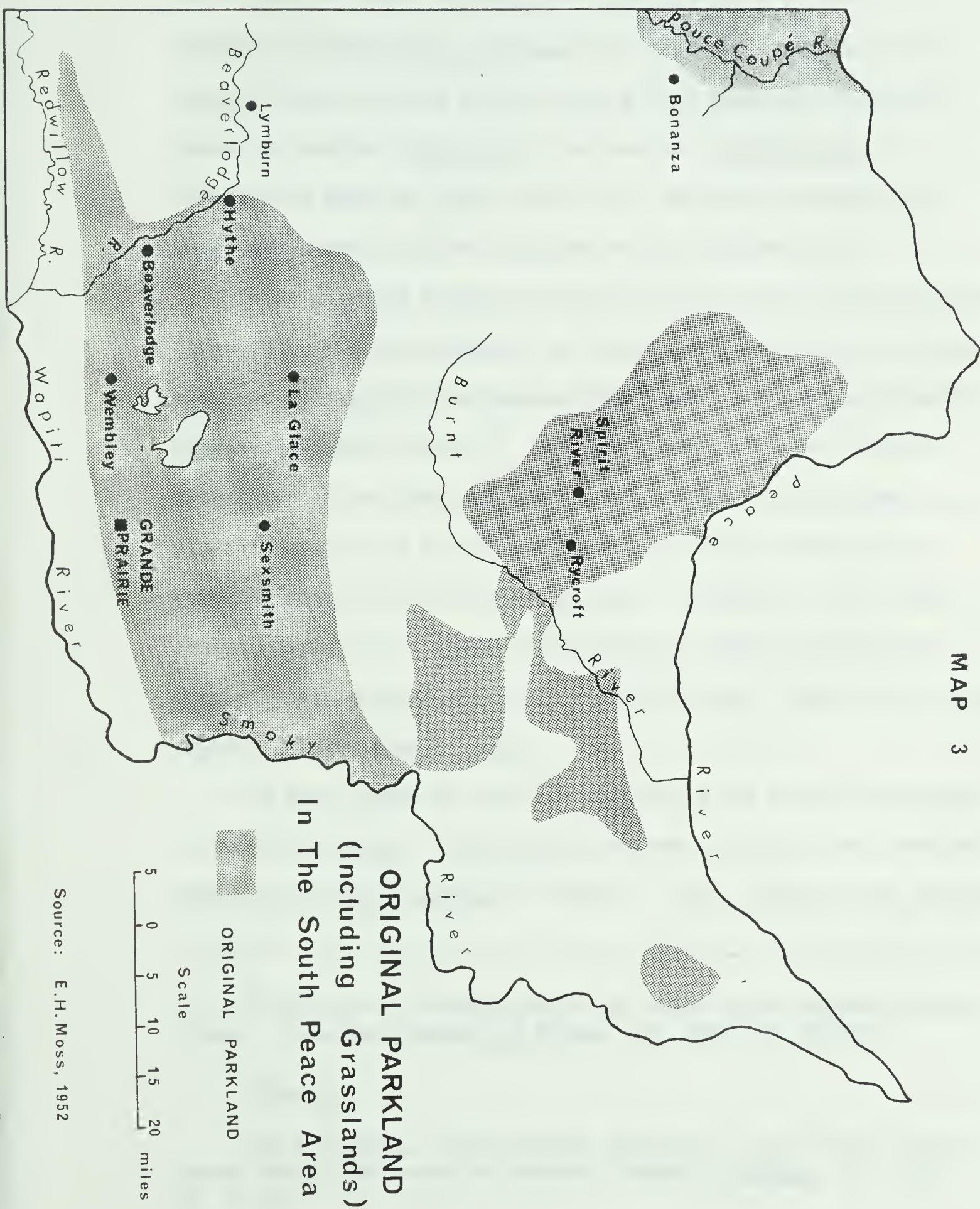
In addition to the above soils, there are patches of swamp and muskeg in many of the wooded areas and especially in the sand dune area along the Wapiti and Smoky Rivers. These areas were more extensive and more numerous before agricultural development. Many of the smaller ones have been eliminated by clearing and breaking of the land; some of the larger ones have been drained to give the farmer more arable land.

Vegetation

Vegetation probably has been the most important factor in accounting for the pattern of settlement in the Peace. Of course this is inextricably linked with the soil patterns as well, but the presence or absence of a moderately heavy tree cover probably has been the most persuasive factor in attracting or discouraging a farmer in his choice of land. Of prime interest in this study was the occurrence of "grassland" areas in the region (see Map 3) for it was to these regions that the early settlers first came. G.M. Dawson⁹ described this area in 1880 as park-like with frequent groves of poplar (Populus tremuloides)

⁹G.M. Dawson, Progress Report of 1879-80, Report B, Geological Survey of Canada, Dawson Bros., Montreal, 1881, 177 p.

MAP 3



and extensive tracts of open grassland. The service berry or saskatoon (Amelanchier alnifolia) was the most predominant of the low bushes and the native grasses were mixed with luxuriant stands of vetches (Vicia spp.) and peavine (Lathyrus spp.). Towards the edges of these 'prairies', the poplar became continuous, then mixed with the conifers of the lighter soils.

There has been frequent speculation as to the origins of these grasslands, and the consensus of opinion seems to be that if they were not actually fire-originated they were at least maintained by fire and edaphic factors.¹⁰ Moss¹¹ believes that the original grasslands of the Peace were much more extensive in the post-glacial period, and that the grasslands of sixty years ago are remnants from this xerothermic period. The grass is not a true native climax for if the grassland were to remain untouched by fire it would quickly revert to a wooded cover. Very little of this native prairie remains today.

The most common of the tree species is the ubiquitous poplar or trembling aspen. This species is favored by fire and clearing.¹² White spruce (Picea glauca), lodgepole (Pinus contorta var. latifolia),

¹⁰ E.H. Moss, "Grasslands of the Peace River Region, Western Canada", Canadian Journal of Botany, 30, 1952, pp. 98-124.

¹¹ Loc.cit.

¹² H.P. Hanson, "Post-glacial Forests in the Grande Prairie-Lesser Slave Lake Areas of Alberta, Canada", Ecology, 33, 1952, pp. 31-40.

and jack pine (Pinus banksiana), larch (Larix laricina), and black spruce (Picea mariana) are the most common conifers. The white spruce is widely scattered, and in the opinion of Hanson,¹³ would be the predominant tree species if the area were to be left untouched by outside agents for a few hundred years. Lodgepole pine and jackpine are common on the lighter, sandy soils, and black spruce or swamp spruce, larch, and willow (Salix spp.), are predominant in the poorly drained areas of bog and muskeg. Balsam poplar (Populus balsamifera) are fairly common in the floodplains of the larger rivers.

There is a close relationship between the open grassland and parkland type of vegetation and the fertile soils of the level lacustrine and lacustro-till deposits. There the early settler had the double advantage of few trees to clear and fertile soil to farm when he chose these grassland regions. It is not surprising, therefore, that these areas were the first to be settled.

Physical Geography of The Study Areas

Lake Saskatoon

One of the earliest of the accurate physical descriptions of this township is the 1909 report of W.G. McFarlane, Dominion Land Surveyor:

¹³Loc.cit.

"The soil in this township is loam from two to ten inches deep with clay subsoil, and it will make excellent farm or grazing land. The western half is almost continuous bush, while the eastern half is mostly prairie with scattered bluffs of poplar and willow. The surface is gently rolling to the east but rises gradually toward the southwest. There is no valuable timber but scattered spruce and poplar from six to ten inches in diameter are found throughout the western half. Hay is scarce and found only on the prairie."¹⁴

Little can be added to the general information given in the report except that the vegetative cover has been completely modified in the east half of the township through clearing and breaking. This is true to a much lesser extent in the western half where heavy bush and less fertile soils have combined to retard modification of the landscape. Fairly extensive stands of bush and timber still exist here, especially on the more sloping lands to the southwest.

The main lakes of the area are Saskatoon Lake in the south-east, Cutbank Lake and Deep Lake in the north-east. Colquhoun Creek skirts the township on the north and several springs are found in the higher land to the south-west. Residents mention a local chinook belt running through the middle of the township that prevents the growing of fall-seeded crops. This seems to be related to Saskatoon Mountain immediately to the west of this area.

Lymburn

Again, Mr. McFarlane's report of the physical features of this township is one of the earliest and best accounts, thus giving the conditions in 1912:

¹⁴Department of the Interior, Abstracts from Reports on Township West of the Fifth and Sixth Meridian between June 30, 1910, and July 1, 1911. Ottawa, n.d.

"The soil is about six inches of black loam with a clay subsoil and will make good farmland. The surface is nearly all covered with scrub, but there is a little prairie and a few hay flats along the Pouce Coupe trail. It is very gently rolling. There is no timber other than a few scattered spruce. Hay is fairly plentiful near the Pouce Coupe trail and is of medium quality. The land is not liable to be flooded."¹⁵

Although much of the land is rated as Class 6 or Class 7 farmland,¹⁶ the soil type is grey wooded to dark grey wooded and not black as Mr. McFarlane's report might have inferred. There are fairly extensive marshes and bogs in the township, especially along the Beaverlodge and Beavertail Rivers and around the Horse Lakes. Due to the heavy cover of brush, this area has been much less modified by man than either of the other two townships.

Bonanza

This township is very level with the land rising very gently toward the south-east corner. There are a few patches of broken land in the north-west corner due to the intrusion of four small tributaries of the Pouce Coupe River. These creeks, though small, are deeply incised into the terrain (up to 300 feet), and a fair amount of waste land is associated with them. These streams also account for the lowered water table that is a problem in this area.

¹⁵Department of the Interior, Abstracts from Reports on Townships West of the Fifth and Sixth Meridians Between July 1, 1912, and July 1, 1913, Ottawa, n.d.

¹⁶W. Odymsky, et.al., op.cit., Soil Rating Map. Soil rating based on soil and other physical features is done according to five classes: 7 - good to very good arable; 6 - fairly good to good arable; 5 - fair to fairly good arable; 4 - poor to fair arable; and, P-W - pasture and woodland.

The township was originally quite heavily covered with bush, but parts of it were burned over just prior to the opening of the land to homesteaders in 1930.¹⁷ This modification of the cover was expanded by the homesteaders and today, only the south-east corner of the township has remained relatively untouched.

The soil is a very heavy clay to clay loam associated for the most part with lacustrine deposits. The land is generally quite fertile¹⁸ and can stand fairly long periods of drought if there are moderate soil moisture reserves. In wet years, drainage is a problem due to the heavy, compact nature of the soil.

¹⁷ Pers. comm. P. Radke, Bonanza.

¹⁸ W. Odymsky, et.al., op.cite., Soil Rating Map.

Chapter III

Historical Background

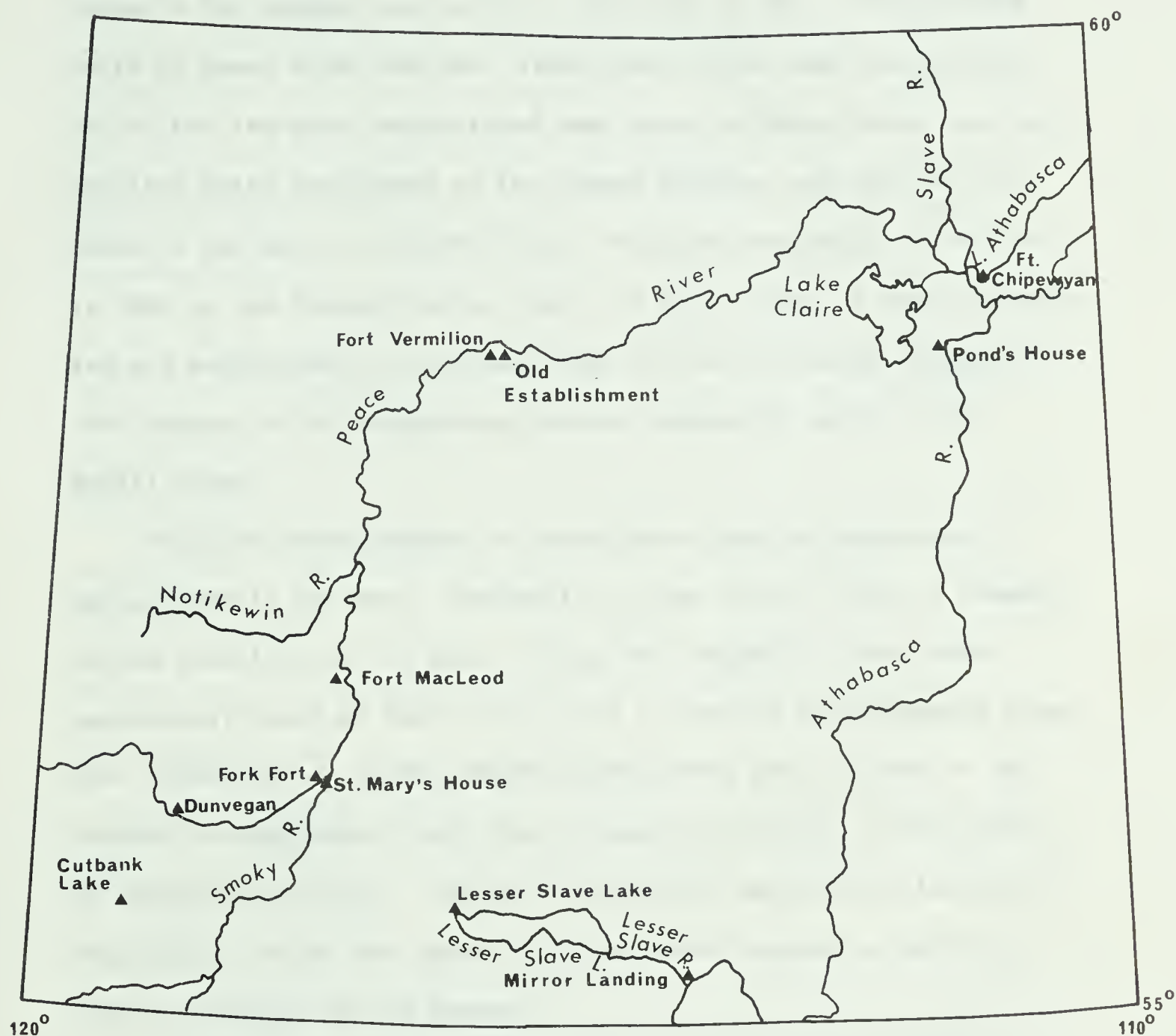
The exploration and development of the Peace River country began with the expanding interest of the fur trade in the north-west. Although this early development had very little impact upon the study areas directly, it encouraged exploration and agricultural speculation that was to result in the settlement of these areas at a much later date. This expansion of fur-trade interest saw the entry of traders into the Lake Athabasca region as early as 1778, when Peter Pond established Pond's House in the Athabasca country.¹ Alexander MacKenzie arrived in 1787² and he immediately began to extend the territory up the Peace River. He sent Boyer to establish a fort near the present site of Fort Vermilion in 1788, and McLeod was sent in 1790 and 1792 to build two posts, about thirty-five miles and twelve miles downstream from Peace River respectively.³ Then, in 1792-93, MacKenzie himself made his historic voyage up the Peace, passing through the heart of the Peace River country. Some years later, in 1805, Dunvegan was established by the McLeod mentioned above.⁴ All

¹H.A. Innes, The Fur Trade in Canada, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1962, p. 152.

²J. Warkentin, (ed.), The Western Interior of Canada, McClelland and Stewart Ltd., Toronto, 1964, p. 86.

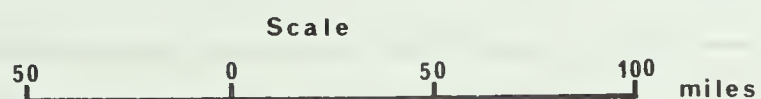
³J.G. McGregor, The Land of Twelve-Foot Davis, Allied Arts Products Ltd., Edmonton, 1952, p. 68.

⁴Ibid., p. 385.



MAP 4

MAJOR FUR TRADE FORTS THE PEACE RIVER AREA



Source: J.G. MacGregor, 1952

of these forts were established by the North-west Company, but the Hudson's Bay Company was active in the area as well, establishing forts at Peace River and Fort Vermilion in this same time period. One of the few posts established away from the Peace River, and the earliest white settlement on the Grande Prairie, was that of the Hudson's Bay post at Cutbank Lake. This post was built by Tom Kerr in 1881 on the Grande Prairie about two miles north of Lake Saskatoon and was established to take advantage of the furs being trapped by the Indians in the surrounding forests especially south of the Wapiti River.

With the establishment of these posts came the beginning of agriculture in the area. MacKenzie was one of the first to comment on the fertility of the soil, noting that vegetables were grown successfully both at Pond's House and at the Old Establishment. [near Fort Vermilion].⁵ These kitchen gardens were kept by many of the traders to supplement their diet of meat and berries, and did well if properly cared for. Nor was this initial agriculture limited to vegetables; barley was grown with remarkable success as early as 1809 at Dunvegan by Dan Harmon.⁶

The presence of this immense tract of partially explored land coupled with the promising reports of some degree of agricultural potential encouraged several surveys of the area, scientific and otherwise. Early opinion almost unanimously agreed on the fact that

⁵Warkentin, op.cit., p. 86.

⁶McGregor, op.cit., p. 163.

although agriculture might be undertaken successfully in the river valleys, it would never be successful on the plateaus. This early pessimism was not without justification: evidence of summer frost was common in the uplands away from the rivers, and this fact seemingly eliminated any hope of agriculture there. Later travelers were more optimistic. Charles Horetzky and John Macoun, on a railway survey for the C.P.R. in 1872, were both enthusiastic about the country and its potential. Macoun recognized the possibility of early and late frosts as a danger to successful agriculture, but was sure that the greater air circulation encouraged by the partial clearing of the country would improve the situation considerably. Equally optimistic was A.R.C. Selwyn of the Geological Survey of Canada who was sent in to investigate the geology and mineral resources of the region in 1875.

One of the most widely published accounts of this region was that of G.M. Dawson of the Geological Survey of Canada who wrote in his report of 1879-80:

"It may be stated at once that the ascertained facts leave no doubt on the subject of the sufficient length and warmth of the season, to ripen wheat, oats and barley, with all the ordinary root crops and vegetables, the only point which may admit of question being to what extent the occurrence of late and early frosts may interfere with growth. This remark is intended to apply to the whole district previously defined, including both the river valleys and the plateau....

While regretting that the data at disposal for the determination of the agricultural value of the Peace River country are not fuller, we may, I believe, arrive with considerable certainty at the general fact that it is great."⁷

⁷Warkentin, op.cit., p. 256.

This general aura of optimism was not to last without opposition. Surveyors and travelers at a later date echoed and reinforced the warnings of Warburton Pike who had emphatically denounced the area as unfit for settlement except perhaps by a few cattlemen. William Ogilvie, Federal Land Surveyor for the Department of the Interior wrote in 1891:

I regret that I have to present such an unfavorable account of a region of which much has been said and written. That the soil is excellent and much of it available for immediate use cannot be denied, but the occurrence of severe frosts on the plateau when the grain is not far enough advanced to resist its effects may be as far as our experience goes considered a certainty in the majority of reasons. ... at present I would advise no one to think of farming except in the river bottom⁸

Not so conservative was young H. Somers Sommerset who, after a thoroughly miserable summer in 1893, wrote of "this rain-haunted land", "muskeg and sludgy swamp" and "rotting timber and the bare, barren mountain".⁹ He was convinced that those who were enthusiastic about the agricultural potential were either glossing over the severe disadvantages that existed or were willingly ignorant of them. He felt that this was an unforgiveable disservice to future settlers, and that the sooner this optimistic bubble was pricked, the better.

Another of the dissenters was James M. Macoun, son of John Macoun, and a biologist for the Geological Survey of Canada, who came to quite different conclusions about the area than did his father. He

⁸G.E. Bowes, (ed.), Peace River Chronicles, Prescott Publishing Co., Victoria, 1963, p. 180.

⁹Ibid., p. 184.

wrote in 1904:

"While the country that has been described should, in the opinion of the writer, not be settled by either the rancher or the grower of wheat until there is more satisfactory evidence that it is suited for either of these pursuits, it may be safely prophesied that after the railways have been built there will be only a very small part of it that will not afford homes for hardy northern people, who never having had much will be satisfied with little. It is emphatically a poor man's country"¹⁰

These "hardy, northern people" did not wait for the railway however. In fact, even before James Macoun had written these words, settlers had started to move into the Peace. The earliest of these settlers were Klondikers, who, discouraged by the immensity of the task of getting to the Yukon and liking the country they were passing through, decided to stay on in the Peace River country. Perhaps the best known is Alex Monkman, for whom Monkman Pass is named. He worked for a while at Lesser Slave Lake before being sent to Lake Saskatoon to establish a fur-trading post for Bredin and Cornwall in 1899. This post was intended to intercept the Indian fur trade coming to the Hudson Bay post of Cutbank Lake. In 1905 he became one of the first cattlemen in the area, taking over a herd that had been driven in from Calgary in 1903, and later he took up a homestead near Lake Saskatoon. Bill Grant and Jim Meade were also early cattlemen in the area, coming in 1905.¹¹

¹⁰Ibid., p. 213.

¹¹Most of the information for the foregoing paragraph was adapted from McGregor op.cit., pp. 351-356.

Up to this time then, the isolated settlers that entered the country did so mainly as traders and cattlemen. Activity was centred around Lake Saskatoon and around the Spirit River Settlement¹² to the north-east. These two locations became important in the early days because of the coincidence of extensive grasslands and early interest by the Hudson Bay Company.

From 1906 and on the settlers that trickled in were farmers interested in grain production as well as livestock. These settlers, lured by reports of fertile soil and free land¹³ started arriving in small groups as early as 1907 and 1908, and by 1910 fairly large areas of land were settled especially on the Grande and Spirit River prairies. One of the largest of these groups of settlers to come in during the early years of settlement was the so-called "Bull Outfit" so named because the people were conveyed by eighteen ox teams. These people were for the most part Burnsites, a religious group, from Ontario, although they had been joined by other families along the way. They arrived in 1909 and settled in the Huallen-Beaverlodge area, and were the main force, along with the Stones and Johnsons who preceeded them by a year, in opening up this part of the country. Almost without exception, these early settlers chose the open prairie lands that offered the least resistance to their efforts to convert

¹²This settlement grew up around the nucleus of the Hudson Bay post and cattle ranch established on the Spirit River in the 1880's.

¹³This land was not entirely free; a registration fee of ten dollars was required for homesteading.

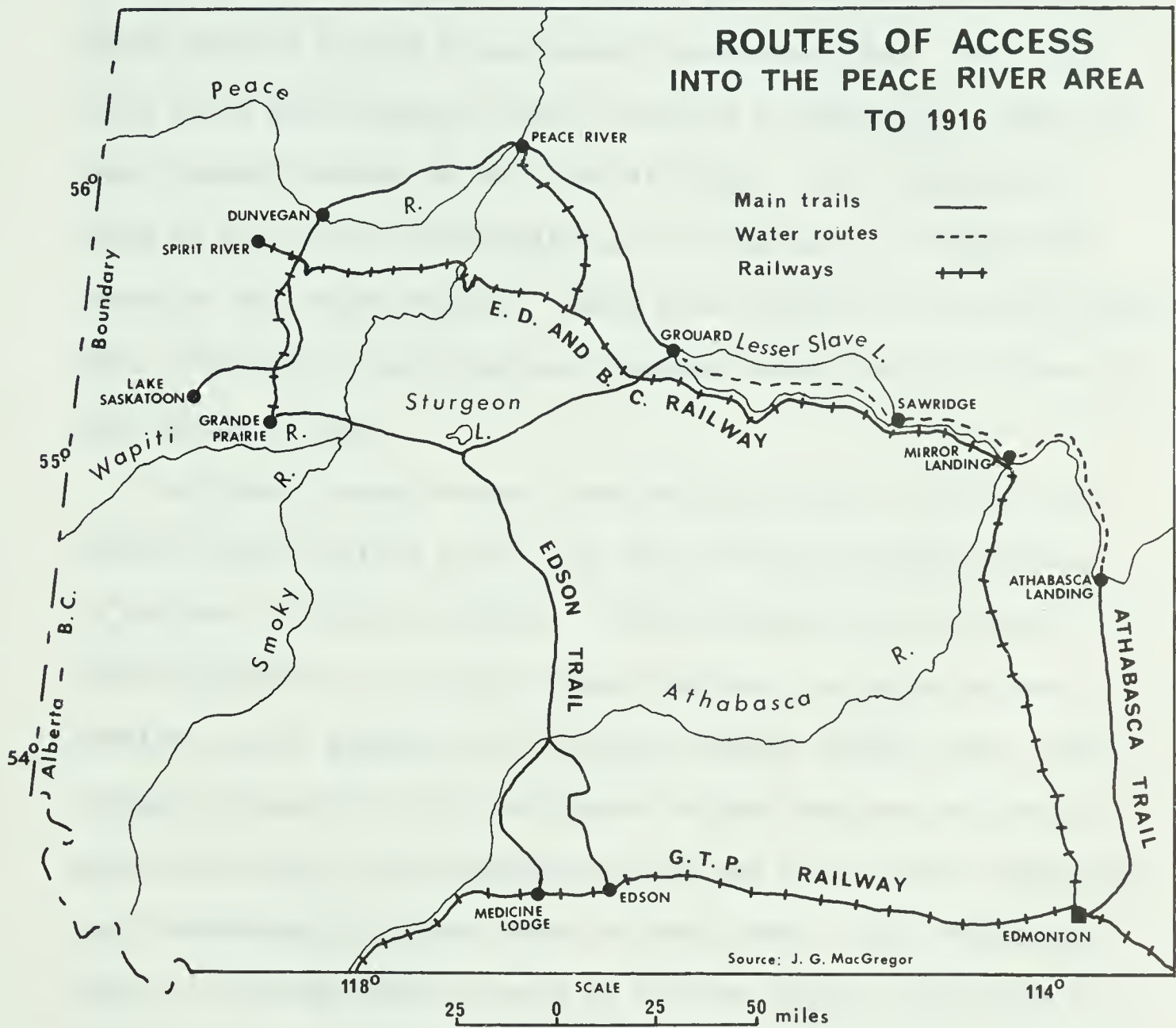
them to cropland. Experience with successful farming on the plains of both Canada and the United States alleviated the doubts of the agricultural potential of non-forested land noticeable in earlier settlement attempts in the United States.

Until 1911, the settlers had to struggle in over the long Athabasca-Slave Lake Trail (See Map 5): Edmonton to Athabasca Landing, Sawridge, Grouard, Peace River, Dunvegan and finally to the Grande Prairie. Some went by way of Sturgeon Lake and the Simonette River, rather than around by Peace River, but although this was a shorter route, it was not so well travelled and therefore in worse condition. In 1911, the Edson Trail was opened¹⁴ and this much shorter route touched off the first land boom in the area. This was one of the earliest large scale efforts of any agency to facilitate settlement in the study area. The Edson Trail was only used until 1915, when the railway finally reached Watino on the Smoky River. By this time, most of the best land had been taken by settlers, eager for the opportunity and independence that this country seemed to promise. The railway not only made it easier for the incoming settlers but did much to give the area the economic stability that it needed. Prior to the railroad, grain had to be disposed of locally, mostly for seed and feed. After 1916, grain could be raised for a much expanded market; also livestock could be shipped out for cash returns.

¹⁴The Edson Trail originally started as a government financial project starting from Medicine Lodge in 1910. When the contractors went bankrupt Mr. A.H. McQuarrie was appointed to take over the job and succeeded in pushing the trail through by the spring of 1911. Mr. McQuarrie used Edson as his base for supplies and hence the name Edson Trail.

MAP 5

ROUTES OF ACCESS INTO THE PEACE RIVER AREA TO 1916



The coming of the railway to Grande Prairie (formerly Prairie City¹⁵) completed the transfer of the business forces from Lake Saskatoon to this village.¹⁶ As end of steel for some nine years, Grande Prairie enjoyed a boom period (population 1916 - 337, 1921 - 1061) while Lake Saskatoon slowly declined in importance. When the steel reached Wembley in 1925, the village of Lake Saskatoon was moved to this site, thus completing the elimination of this first centre on the Grande Prairie. Towns grew rapidly as the steel reached them, especially those which were terminal points for the railway for some period of time.

Settlement spread outward from the main areas of focus, most notably Grande Prairie in the east and Lake Saskatoon-Beaverlodge in the west in the study region. Initially expansion was onto adjoining prairie or parkland areas, but soon the influx of new settlers forced expansion onto the more heavily bushed lands. This pressure eventually forced settlement of land that was marginal for grain production, and consequently there was a significant amount of land abandonment that took place in these areas. This abandonment began in isolated areas as early as 1916 but became significant in the years between 1927 and 1930. While land abandonment was significant, it is interesting to note that, except in a few cases, there

¹⁵It is not known exactly when Prairie City was dropped from common usage, but the incorporation of the settlement as a village in 1914 was effected under the name of Grande Prairie.

¹⁶Three different railway surveys had been run near the site of Lake Saskatoon but eventually Grande Prairie was chosen as its destination. The railway gave as its reason the more favorable grades, but old-timers in the area say it was due to political pressure from Grande Prairie.

was little abandoned land. As soon as one settler would vacate, another settler would be waiting to move on to the land.

It is obvious from the preceding remarks that settlement was far from uniform over the study area; certain areas having coincidence of non-forest cover and fertile soil were favored above other areas and were settled first and most intensively. Other less favorable areas were settled later and more sporadically. Settlement growth was not uniform over time either. spurts of growth due to re-settlement after both World Wars, to influxes of farmers during the Depression, and more recently to lack of room for expansion in the south, were partially offset by outward migration during the war years especially during the early twenties when crop and market conditions were poor. Overall, however, growth has been the dominant characteristic.

Chapter IV

General Settlement Factors

Three groups of factors can be recognized in the settlement of this area. These may be called negative, positive and facilitative factors. Those in the negative class have been responsible for the farmer leaving his original location. In most cases they reflect dissatisfaction with home conditions. The positive category is concerned with those attractive factors that directed this induced movement to the Peace River region. The facilitative factors are those that made it easier for the settler to act upon his desire of moving to this area.

In most cases there was a combination of factors involved in the settler's movement to the Peace. This combination included not only positive, negative and facilitative factors but quite possibly several factors within the same class as well. Thus there was a marked relationship between the positive factors of publicity and the inherent attraction of cheap, available land. Similar examples exist within the negative class. The lack of future in the farmer's previous occupation and the prohibitive cost of acquiring local land often acted together to encourage the farmer or would-be-farmer to move. Only rarely did one factor act in complete isolation from other factors in its class. In almost every case also there was evidence of a combination of factors from different classes. These factors are treated separately here however for the sake of clarity and to reduce repetition. Classification of the interviews was based upon the factor rated dominant by each farmer.

A. Negative Factors

As mentioned above, these are the factors responsible for the desire of the farmer to move in the first place. They are called negative because in one way or another they express the farmer's dissatisfaction with his former location. These factors ranged in intensity from a definite need to move due to unfavorable living conditions to a somewhat less definite feeling of general dissatisfaction due to apparent lack of satisfactory future or to restlessness. Although not negative in the same way, leaving the previous location as children because parents moved is included in this group.¹

1. Land Cost

These farmers were forced to leave their home area because of local high land prices. Usually these original homes were in long established farming areas. When the need came to expand either to make room for a number of sons, or from economic necessity, it was found too expensive to do so. Others, either renting land or in some other occupation encountered the same impasse when they attempted to start a farm of their own. For those that owned land, the solution was to sell their land at a good price and either buy or homestead cheaper land elsewhere. Some used part of the capital so acquired

¹ Those farmers interviewed who were born in the Peace are not included in this section; hence there is a discrepancy in the number of interviews listed under positive and negative factors.

to buy South African Scrip,² thus allowing them to take up a section (640 acres) of land (two scrips) under modified homestead regulations. Those that did not own land had to rely on homesteading³ or on buying cheap land farther away from the older centres of farming.

Of the farmers interviewed, over 26 per cent gave this as the dominant reason for leaving their former location. Moreover, some of the farmers that left because of "lack of future in the area" might have stayed had there been cheap land available to them at home, hence land expense could be a contributing factor in other cases as well. Over half of the farmers giving this reason for leaving entered the Peace between 1927 and 1930 and it is not surprising to find land expense a significant factor at that time, as good land in communities established at the turn of the century already was becoming both hard to obtain and costly. It is interesting to note however, that three of the four farmers that entered in 1910 or earlier gave this same reason. Even at this time, land prices in areas such as Lacombe, Alberta, were a factor in encouraging farmers to go to the frontier where land was cheap. Also noteworthy is the fact that each of these farmers took maximum advantage of the amount of land available under homestead and scrip. This gave them the double advantage of land and capital, (surplus after buying the scrip),

²This scrip, under the conditions of the Volunteer Bounty Act of 1908, allowed veterans of the South African War to take up 320 acres of land each. Since the scrip was transferable, it could be purchased by non-veterans.

³Homesteading and homesteading policy will be discussed later in this chapter.

and was probably one of the most important reasons that they were and are successful farmers.

On the basis of the interviews, the land expense factor seems to have had but minor influence in the years between 1930 and 1960. In the sixties three out of the four farmers again identified this as the dominant factor in moving. This is to be expected as land prices have climbed sharply during the last few years, especially in established farming areas of Alberta and elsewhere. Those that wish either to start farming or to expand the present farm must do so at considerable cost or else buy cheaper land or homestead. This pressure is presently being felt in the older farming area of the Peace itself, and it seems likely that the fringes of settlement will continue to be expanded by farmers forced out of their previous home by high land prices.

2. National Factors

This group of factors is concerned with dissatisfaction or pressure on a much broader scale than the local situation. Farmers giving answers that fell into this category indicated that political, social and economic conditions prevalent in the country as a whole were the main cause for leaving. Specific answers included "too much control", "population pressure", "lack of freedom" and "poor living conditions".

Just over 9 per cent of the farmers interviewed fell into this category. None came into the Peace before 1927 and the latest entrant to give this reason came in 1957. As one would expect, the majority of these farmers came from Europe (six out of seven) and one came from Saskatchewan, the latter from provincial rather than national factors.

3. Physical Factors

In this group, the answers indicated that the reason for leaving the former location was dissatisfaction with the physical conditions of the area. Five of the eight farmers in this category gave drought as the main incentive for moving. All of these farmers came either from Saskatchewan or south-central Alberta. Four of these five came to the Peace between 1927 and 1932. The remaining three farmers indicated that the poor quality of the land itself was the reason for leaving. This total of eight farmers represent 10.5 per cent of the farmers interviewed.

4. No Future

Farmers giving answers grouped in this category were encouraged to move by the fact that there was no future in their former occupations. Of the six (8 per cent of the total) that gave this reason for leaving, five were in occupations other than farming (e.g. woodworking, store-keeper, railway worker, etc.). Some were forced out of their occupations because of lack of work and others because of lack of income. The one remaining farmer in this category indicated that there was no future in farming someone else's land and wanted to get out on his own.

It should be noted that here, perhaps more than in any other negative category, relationships exist between factors in the same category. It was not only the lack of future in their occupations, but also the lack of cheap, available land that forced them to move. Had such land been available, it is probable that they would have remained in their home area. This would be especially true of the situation in which the one farmer in this group found himself.

Striking out on one's own is impossible in an area where land is both expensive and hard to acquire. The strength of positive factors influence relocation decisions in this category as it does in all the negative categories.

5. With Parents

Although this is not a negative factor of the same sort, it must be included here, for it is one of the most common reasons given for leaving the previous location. Thirty-two per cent of those interviewed gave this reason. Twelve of these twenty-four farmers were able to explain the reasons that induced their parents to move, and these answers were used as though they themselves had been interviewed. While it would seem that this section does little to explain the movement away from the previous location, it is significant that such a large percentage of those interviewed were people who continued with farming after coming into the Peace at an early age.

6. Other Factors

The factors in this section are grouped for convenience rather than because of any similarity they might share. They are factors that were mentioned only rarely, and thus do not warrant individual analysis under separate headings. Of the ten farmers giving answers that fit into this category, three indicated there was no specific negative reason for leaving, but rather a response only to the encouraging information that came from the Peace River Country. Two others expressed the same lack of a specific negative reason, but they left because others of their family either had gone before or

were presently going.⁴ Two others gave adventure and restlessness as the main reason for leaving home. The rest of the answers were quite diverse: one left the city because it was thought to be an unsatisfactory environment in which to raise children; one was transferred while still in the Army, and one moved because conditions at that particular time were conducive to his leaving with his family.

B. Positive Factors

These factors are treated as positive because they acted as magnets in drawing settlers from other areas. They may have only directed movement already encouraged by negative factors, or they themselves, by the degree of attractiveness, may have induced people to move. In general then, these factors are those that determined the broad choice of the Peace River Country as the destination of these induced movements.

In a large measure, these factors are very much inter-related. In a sense, the factor called "the invitation of the land", a phrase borrowed from Isaiah Bowman,⁵ is the basis for most of the factors under this broad heading. It was the presence of this large section of relatively good arable land combined with its cheapness and availability due to its isolation, its undeveloped nature and government

⁴These were members of the family other than the parents, otherwise they would have been included in Category 5.

⁵I. Bowman, The Pioneer Fringe, American Geographical Society, Special Publication No. 13, New York, 1931, p. 34.

homestead policies that gave rise to the enthusiasm evident in the publicity of the region. This publicity was not limited to glowing government-sponsored accounts. Relatives, friends and other individuals did much to spread the news of excellent farming conditions in the Peace, and were highly successful in attracting settlers it would appear.

While this one factor seems to be basic to several of the factors under this general section, the farmers recognized by their answers that there were specific aspects of it that influenced their decision to move to the Peace. For this reason then, and because it gives a more detailed analysis of the positive factors, these are treated separately.

1. The Invitation of the Land

Although this phrase is taken from Bowman, the meaning is not exactly the same. Bowman indicated that this phrase meant the attraction of the land due to its promise of fulfillment to the new settler, new opportunities, less chance of failure and the opportunity to improve one's state by means of techniques that were familiar to him. The use of the phrase in this study is slightly different. While there is little doubt that these meanings underlie most of the movement treated in this section, the emphasis here is on the specific or overt manifestation of this "invitation". As mentioned above, it is the availability and the cheapness of the land that are the most apparent reasons for this lure of the land. Bowman's interpretation is valid here, but it is not apparent in the answers given by the

farmer, perhaps because it is so basic that only its overt manifestations are expressed by him.

Eighteen and one half per cent of the farmers indicated that it was the lure of cheap and available land that drew them to the Peace region. This includes farmers desirous of more land and those that were without land but anxious for one reason or another to own their own land. Since this was a large region of available arable land that could be had for the taking, it is not surprising that many farmers and non-farmers took advantage of the opportunities presented by the land. Of the sixteen farmers that gave this reason for coming to the Peace half arrived in the 1920's, the large majority of these came between 1927 and 1930. There is then a gap of about twenty years until once again in the 1950's and 1960's, this became a dominant factor.

The three that came into the Peace in 1910 or earlier took land not only because it was available, but also because they could take advantage of the increased amount of land available under the Volunteer Bounty Act (South African Scrip). Those early settlers that availed themselves of this opportunity had two advantages: they were early enough to choose the best of the land, and they could start with a sufficient amount of land to make a worthwhile farm unit. Others who could only afford to homestead had to be content with a single quarter (160 acres) or wait until enough money could be saved to buy land nearby.

2. Advertising

It bears repeating that the advertising of the Peace by government and by individuals cannot be disassociated from the invitation of the land. The two factors are inseparable: it was the lure of the land working, but through the medium of advertising. In most cases this enhanced any inherent attraction the land had because of cheapness and availability, so in this sense the lure is strengthened. In this section the emphasis was upon the good soils and moderate climate--the physical advantages of the region, and the success of its pioneers. Advertising gave a more positive attraction to the inherent invitation of the land. Publicity of the Peace came from two sources: government publications and private testimonies. It is difficult to say which had the most permanent effect in drawing settlers to the Peace.

Government publications were often exaggerated accounts of the fertility of the soil and of the moderate climate. This was not necessarily a deliberate attempt to induce settlers to this area; often it was due to insufficient meteorological and soil data, and a general lack of knowledge of the area. Exaggerated claims as to the extent of extremely fertile soil became common, often being limited only by the enthusiasm of the individual and often in inverse proportion to his knowledge of the land. This led to the belief that a good income from the farm was practically assured anywhere. As in many publicity campaigns, the good points of the area were over-emphasized and the exceptional became the average. Physical and locational handicaps were often either not mentioned or excused. Illustrative of this latter point is the case of summer frosts.

While they could not be ignored, much was made of the assumption that when the land was cleared, these frosts would become insignificant. While this assumption has proven partially true, it was little consolation to the pioneers who began to open up the land and had to contend with summer frosts as a real hazard that could not be theorized away.

Then there was the publicity given the Peace by enthusiastic pioneers such as A. M. Bezanson. His booklet "The Peace River Trail" did much to publicize the area and to encourage others to come. Other groups were more interested in material gain as they advertised and sold town lots in Dunvegan and other imaginary bustling centres in the region to unwary buyers. Though their intentions were not always honourable, they did their part in advertising the potential of the Peace. More significant in terms of lasting effects was the publicity brought especially to the Wembley-Lake Saskatoon-Beaverlodge area by the agricultural successes of Herman Trelle, Justyn and Lloyd Rigby and W.D. Albright. Herman Trelle brought fame to the Wembley area when he started a succession of thirty-four agricultural championships by winning both the world wheat and oat crown in 1926. The Rigbys won championships in both wheat and oats in the late 1930's. W.D. Albright is best known for his extensive and rewarding experiments with grains and grasses, and his initiation of the Beaverlodge Experimental Farm in 1915.⁶

⁶This was the year that official test plots were set up by Mr. Albright. In 1919 this became an official sub-station and in 1941 it became a full-fledged Experimental Station of the Dominion Governmental Farms Service.

Twenty-one per cent of the farmers interviewed gave the publicity of advertising of the Peace as the predominant reason for choosing it as their home. This was the largest single factor in the positive group. Two of the farmers specifically mentioned the successes of Herman Trelle as significant. Two-thirds of these eighteen farmers came to the Peace in the 1920's; none giving this reason came later than 1949. It seems by this time, advertising of the Peace became unnecessary because of the wide-spread knowledge about the area; people came to the Peace because they needed land or for some other reason.

3. Relatives

Here the experience and testimony of relatives already resident in the Peace was the main factor in drawing others to the area. Again, it is apparent that there was an inter-relationship between this and the two preceding factors. This in itself constitutes a form of advertising, but in a much stronger and more personal way. In these cases the encouragement to come was by people with actual experience in the area and more important, who were trusted because of their kinship. The fact that this encouragement carried a great deal of weight is evidenced by the fact that fourteen of eighty-six farmers (over 16 per cent) indicated this as the dominant factor in their coming to the Peace. As one would expect, this factor played a relatively important role throughout the settlement of the Peace, except in the very early years when everyone was new to the area.

4. Other Factors

Other factors mentioned that did not fit into any of the preceding groups of positive factors are listed here. Only three were mentioned: one farmer was transferred to the Peace while still in the army; one immigrant farmer was sent to the Peace by the immigration authorities because there was no land available in Ontario, and one farmer gave chance as the explanation--he was on his way to Meadow Lake in Saskatchewan and switched destinations on the trail.

Also included in this section are the 24 farmers who came with their parents and the eleven who were born in the Peace. These again are not strictly positive factors, but they do account for the presence of the farmer in the study region.

Table III

Negative Factors*

	-1910	11-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-65	Total
Expense	3	-	11	-	2	1	3	20
No future	-	1	3	-	-	1	1	6
Physical	-	-	4	1	2	1	-	8
National	-	-	3	1	1	2	-	7
Other	-	1	6	-	2	-	1	10
With Parents	1	2	15	3	3	-	-	24
Total (No. of farmers)	4	4	42	5	10	5	5	75

*Note: Dates refer to the farmer's entry to the Peace River region.

Table IV

Positive Factors*

	-1910	11-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-65	Total
Invitation Of the land	3	-	8	-	-	2	4	16
Advertising	-	1	12	1	3	-	-	18
Relatives	-	1	7	-	2	3	1	14
Parents came	1	2	15	3	3	-	-	24
Born	-	2	3	5	1	-	-	11
Other	-	-	-	1	2	-	-	3
Total (No. of farmers)	4	6	45	10	11	5	5	86

*Note: Dates refer to the farmer's entry to the Peace River region.

C. Facilitative Factors

These factors are considered separately even though they are positive in the sense that they encouraged settlers to come to the Peace. They are called facilitative factors because while they exerted no special attraction in themselves, they made it easier for the settler to act upon his desire to move to the Peace.

For example, though the Edson Trail in itself was not a major attraction in drawing settlers to the Peace, it had the effect of making it easier for many settlers to respond to the positive factors mentioned in the previous chapter. Such factors must be considered, even though they are not specifically mentioned by the farmers interviewed. Although this section could validly include many such facili-

tative factors, only major factors, especially those dealing with policy and access will be considered. These can be shown to have a significant influence on the process of settlement.

1. Governmental Land Policies *

The Dominion Land Act of 1872 was the first official expression of dominion land settlement policies. Under this Act which confirmed the "free homestead" system, the settlers could take out a 160 acre homestead for an application fee of ten dollars, and could purchase up to a total of 640 acres at a fixed price. Title was given to the settler upon fulfillment of residence and cultivation duties within three years. In 1874 provision was made for the "pre-emption" of an additional quarter of land provided it adjoined the homestead. Many minor changes in the conditions of the Act took place in the following years till 1890. At that time pre-emption was abolished and the system reverted back to free homesteading only. By 1908, in recognition of the need for a larger farm unit, pre-emption was re-introduced along with a homestead purchase plan whereby a farmer could buy at a fixed price an additional quarter of land. Also in 1908, the Volunteer Bounty Act was passed by which veterans of the South African War were given scrip allowing them to take up 320 acres of land under modified homestead regulations. As noted previously this scrip was transferable and much of it was bought by prospective farmers or speculators. The Soldier's Settlement Act of 1917 allowed war veterans to acquire land under relaxed homestead regulations. In 1928 an

*Government land policy up to 1930 was found to be most significant in the study areas, however for a brief summary of policy development since 1930 see Appendix II.

act was passed allowing farmers who had patented⁷ their land before 1925 to take a second homestead.

The intent of these various governmental land policies was to encourage and speed settlement in Western Canada and this they succeeded in doing. With respect to the study area, these policies were an inherent part of the invitation of the land. Whatever their weakness in encouraging small farms and speculative practices they did provide the prospective settler with available and "free" land. While it is apparent there was a high percentage of casualties among the homesteading entrants, (of 11,837 homestead entries to the Peace River region to March 31, 1919, 3697 had been cancelled by that date)⁸ these policies encouraged masses of settlers to move to the Peace where large blocks of reasonably good land could be had. It is quite possible that the high casualty incidence among homesteaders was due to the administration of the policies rather than to the policies themselves.

The conditions and advantages of acquiring South African scrip have been mentioned above. Martin⁹ states that of the 1,063,360 acres granted under this policy in Alberta, 96 per cent were duly patented.

⁷Farmers obtaining legal title to their land by fulfilling homestead regulations are said to have "patented" their land.

⁸Compiled from the Annual Reports of the Department of the Interior, 1911-1920.

⁹C. Martin, "Dominion Lands Policy", Part II of Volume II of the Canadian Frontiers of Settlement Series, C.A. MacIntosh and W.L.G. Joerg (eds.), Ottawa, 1934, pp. 191-571.

While Martin attributes this success to the "acquisitiveness of the speculator rather than to the pertinacity of the South African veteran,"¹⁰ it is the opinion of the author that this high rate of success was due to the factors already mentioned (larger farm unit and choice of land--at least in the Peace area) plus the fact that only those with considerable amount of capital could buy scrip from the veterans. This combination of factors certainly gave these farmers a considerable advantage in their farming ventures.

2. Access

A significant factor in facilitating movement of settlers to the study area was the development and improvement of routes of access.

a. The Edson Trail

The Edson Trail was originally started by a group of realtors who had planned a townsite at Medicine Lodge on the Grand Trunk Pacific Railroad west of Edmonton. This group obtained a contract from the government to build a wagon road from Medicine Lodge to Grande Prairie. The terrain over which the trail was to pass had not been surveyed and the building of the road was extremely difficult due to hills, muskeg and windfall. The Medicine Lodge group started building in the fall of 1910 but ran out of funds and abandoned the project early in 1911 at the Athabasca River. Mr. A.H. McQuarrie was then appointed by the government to complete the project. By this time the businessmen of Edson had built a trail from that point

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 424.

to intercept the Medicine Lodge trail at the Athabasca. Since Edson already was a bustling little town whereas Medicine Lodge was still just a point on the railroad, Mr. McQuarrie chose Edson as his main supply point, and hence the trail became known as the Edson-Grande Prairie Trail or simply the Edson Trail. This road was completed in 1911.¹¹

Though the Edson Trail was difficult to travel, especially in the summer, it greatly shortened the distance to the Peace River Country. Settlers who might have been discouraged by the long and difficult Athabasca-Slave Lake route were willing to endure the difficulties of the shorter Edson Trail. The records of homestead applications at Grouard and Grande Prairie give some indication of the effect of the opening of this route. During the year ending March 31, 1911, a total of 394 entries were recorded. In the year ending March 31, 1912, 1246 entries were recorded, an increase of over 300 per cent.¹² The Edson Trail was abandoned in 1915 when the Edmonton, Dunvegan and British Columbia Railroad reached Watino, where the railway crossed the Smoky River east of Rycroft.

b. The Edmonton, Dunvegan and British Columbia Railroad

A charter to build a rail extension into the Peace River region was obtained in 1907, and construction started on the E.D.

¹¹Much of the information contained in this paragraph came from personal communication with the late Mr. McQuarrie, Edmonton.

¹²Canada, Department of the Interior, Annual Reports, Ottawa, 1911, 1912.

and B.C. Railroad in 1912, beginning from Edmonton.¹³ The route was by way of Athabasca, Sawridge, High Prairie, McLennen, Watino, Rycroft and Spirit River, reaching the last point in 1916. A rail extension from Rycroft south to Grande Prairie was completed in the same year. Grande Prairie remained the terminus for the railroad until 1924 when it was extended west to Wembley. In 1928 it was further extended to Hythe and it reached Dawson Creek in 1930.

The entrance of the railroad had two definite effects on the settlement process. First of all it made entrance much easier and hence encouraged more settlers to respond to their desires of moving to the Peace. Secondly, it greatly enhanced the invitation of the land by spurring the developing economy. Not only could land be obtained cheaply but the chances of making an adequate living on it were greatly increased.

Illustration of the effect of the railroad on the entrance of settlers is difficult because homestead applicants became fewer during these years due to World War I. This tended to offset any marked increase in homestead applications due to the entrance of the railroad. However, some indication of the railroad's importance can be illustrated by a comparison of homestead entries at Grouard and Grande Prairie. From June 11, 1911, when entries were taken at both land offices, until 1913, Grande Prairie entries exceeded the number of entries taken at Grouard. However in 1914, the year the

¹³G.1A. Willis, Transportation in the Peace River Region, Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Alberta, 1966, p. 39.

rail was laid to Sawridge (Slave Lake), entries at Grouard totalled 1242 and in Grande Prairie, 839. According to the agent at Grouard, this was mainly due to the railroad.¹⁴ Entries at Grouard continued to be higher than at Grande Prairie until 1916, when the rail line was completed to Spirit River and Grande Prairie.

Summary

Three sets of factors have been recognized and discussed in the settlement of the South Peace: negative, positive, and facilitative. In the negative category, land cost, national and physical factors, and lack of future were the most common. Positive factors found to be important were the invitation of the land, advertising, and relatives. In both positive and negative categories, those farmers who came with their parents have been noted, but since this factor does not provide any information as to the reason for movement, it has been treated very briefly. Finally, the facilitative factors of access and government land policy and their effects on the settlement process were discussed.

¹⁴Canada, Department of the Interior, op.cit.

Chapter V

Settlement Processes and Patterns in the Study Areas

A. Lake Saskatoon

1. Processes

As noted in Chapter Three, Lake Saskatoon was the earliest center of settlement on the Grande Prairie. Most of the important points in the early history of that settlement have been outlined so they will not be repeated here. Active land settlement began in 1910 when the township was thrown open for homesteading. Thirty-six quarters were filed on (i.e. an application made for homesteading) that year, and by 1912, just over 50 per cent of the available land either had been sold or was being homesteaded.¹ Further activity was sporadic until 1927, most occurring before 1917. 1928 marked the beginning of the second land rush, and twenty-six quarters were filed on in that year. This rush was occasioned by several factors: very poor crop conditions in south and central Alberta and Saskatchewan, two good crops in 1926 and 1927 and promise of a third in 1928 in the Peace region, the successes of Herman Trelle in international grain competition at this time, and other factors as well. By the end of this year (1928) most of the land had been taken (87 per cent). Once again settlement, either by homestead or by government sale became sporadic until 1950, when the last quarter of available Crown land was taken.

¹Information on dates of homestead entries, patents and sales here and in the following sections has been obtained from the Township Registers, Grande Prairie Land Office.

THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES

CHAPTER I

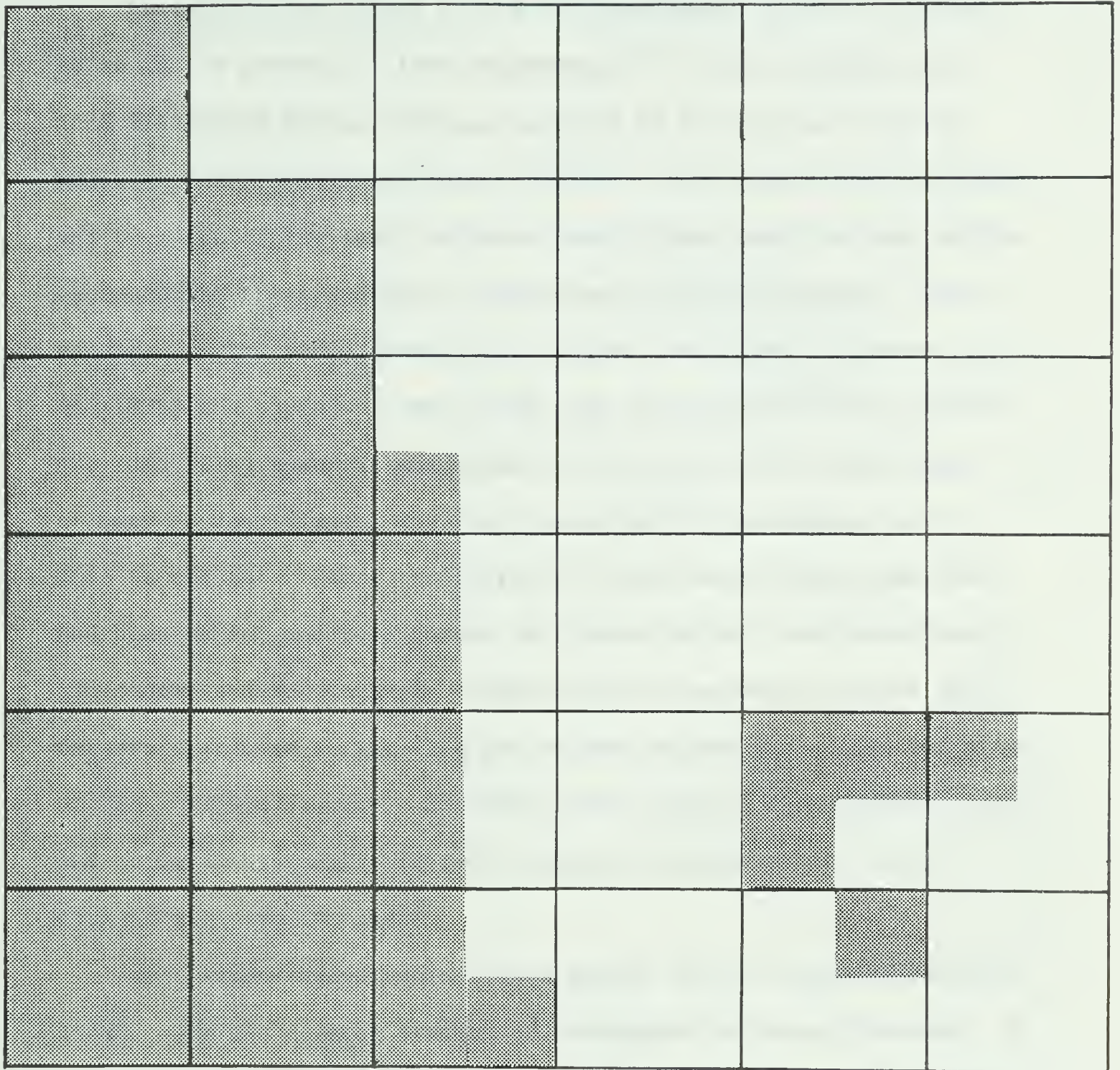
THE FOUNDING FATHERS

The history of the United States is a story of the struggle for freedom and self-government. It begins with the first settlers who came to the New World in search of a better life. These settlers, known as the Pilgrims, were driven from their homes in England by religious persecution. They found a new land, but they also found a new set of challenges. They had to learn to live in a new environment, to grow their own food, and to defend themselves against the native Americans. Despite these hardships, the Pilgrims succeeded in establishing a new community based on the principles of democracy and self-government. This community, known as the Plymouth Colony, became a model for other settlers who came to the New World. The story of the United States is a story of the struggle for freedom and self-government. It is a story of the founding fathers who laid the foundation for the nation. It is a story of the men who fought for the principles of liberty and justice for all. It is a story of the men who built the nation from scratch. It is a story of the men who gave us the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. It is a story of the men who gave us the Declaration of Independence. It is a story of the men who gave us the American Dream. It is a story of the men who gave us the United States of America.

The boundary between those quarters settled before 1916 and those settled later is quite pronounced. Those settled before 1916 occur on the east or prairie half of the township and those settled later on the west or forested half (see Diagram I). There are few exceptions to this pattern, and these are mostly due to the late sale of Section 11, the school section in the eastern half. This gives some indication of the attractiveness the prairie land had for the first farmers. It was only when the demand for land became acute that the rougher, more heavily forested areas were taken.

In the early years of settlement, the hamlet of Lake Saskatoon, situated on the south-west corner of Saskatoon Lake (South half of NW 2 - Twp. 72-8-W6th), reflected the general growth and development of the immediate area. In 1906, Revillon Frères bought out the post that Bredin and Cornwall had established earlier. The first church was built in 1908 and in 1909 a steam sawmill was built. A branch of the Canadian Bank of Commerce was opened in 1911, and a formal townsite was surveyed the following year. Other businesses were added during the next few years: a blacksmith shop, several stores, a poolroom, restaurants and livery stables. A lawyer, a Dominion Telegraph office and a police detachment were also located here. Although this settlement was commonly known as Saskatoon Lake in the early days, the Post Office address was Beaverlodge until 1912. At that time the name was transferred to the present settlement of Beaverlodge, and the name Lake Saskatoon became the official Post Office address. When the railway line reached Wembley in 1925, all the businesses still at the Lake Saskatoon townsite were moved to Wembley, and the land on which the town had stood was subsequently sold as farmland.

DIAGRAM 1



ORIGINAL SETTLEMENT

LAKE SASKATOON TOWNSHIP

Land settled 1916 and earlier



Land settled after 1916



Scale



Source: Township Registers

An interesting aspect of the farm settlement process outlined above is the process of land abandonment.² In this township all land filed upon before 1927 was patented by the original settler. This success probably was due to the fact that the earlier settlers had the pick of the land, and also that fifteen South African Scrips representing thirty quarters were taken out in this period. This resulted in the added advantage of larger farm units. Between 1927 and 1930, the period of the second land rush, almost 25 per cent of the land filed upon was abandoned at least once and in some areas as many as four times. The high percentage of abandonment at this time is due to at least two factors. First, most of the good land had been taken, and this forced settlement during these years onto the poorer and more heavily timbered land. Secondly, many of the farmers that came during this period were either from dried out areas or from the Old Country. In either case, many of them lacked capital and so were more easily forced to give up because of the costly task of clearing the land.

Two points should be made with regard to the foregoing material. First, only the general process of settlement has been discussed. No account is taken of change of land titles and consolidation of holdings although it is acknowledged that both these processes have been active over the years. Secondly the stated settlement dates refer to the date of entry or of sale of the land and do not necessarily indicate the time at which the land became alienated, i.e. when it

²Abandonment refers to land filed on for homestead and subsequently abandoned either by choice or by cancellation before patent was obtained. This has no reference to land sold by farmers after obtaining title.

became private land. These same two points are equally applicable in the following two sections.

2. Patterns

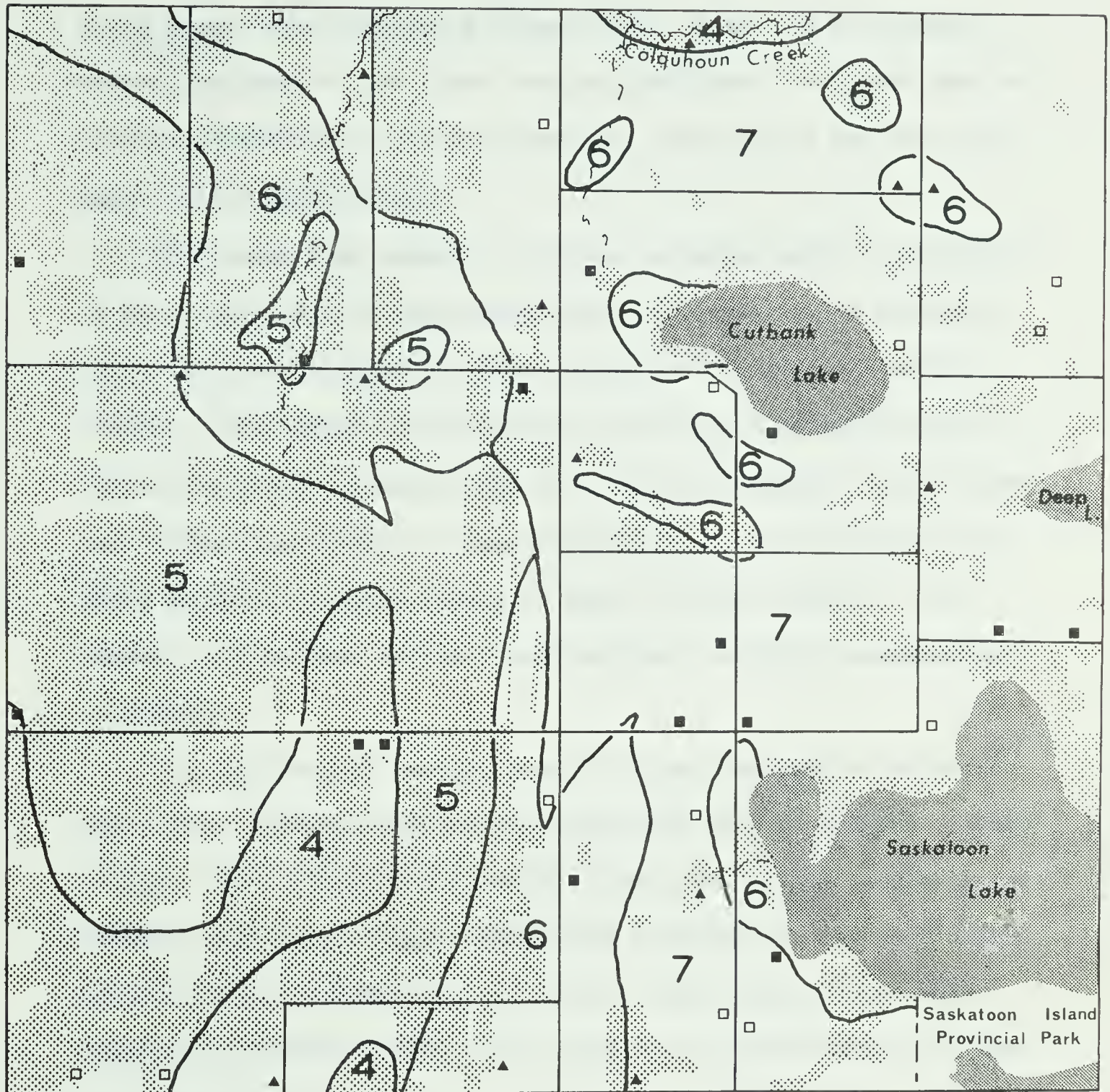
The average farm size in this area is 512 acres, with the average amount of improved land per farm being 406 acres. This is larger in both categories than the figures for the County (480 and 303 acres respectively).³ This may be partially explained by the fact that most of the interviews were conducted in the eastern half of the township where figures for both farm size and improved acreage would tend to be larger.

The differences in field patterns between the eastern and western halves of the township are apparent from Map 6. Improved land in the west half follows much the same pattern as that in the Lymburn area--pockets of land sporadically scattered throughout the unimproved land. In the east half the converse is true with the few small patches of unimproved land coinciding with stream courses or with localized areas of poor drainage.

Differences are apparent in the kinds and concentration of farmsteads as well. The majority are located in the open, east half while only a few are found in the rougher, forested west half. Farmsteads are fairly large and attractive in this area generally, although those found in the west half are often smaller. Although one storey houses are the most common, many two storey houses are to be found. Frame construction is the rule, and only one family lives in

³Census of Canada, 1961.

MAP 6



LAKE SASKATOON GENERAL LAND USE - 1961

Main roads		Park boundary	
Improved land		Farmstead	
Unimproved land		Farmstead interviewed	
Soil rating	5	Farmstead unoccupied	



Sources: A.R.D.A. Land use inventory
Odynsky *et. al.*, 1961

a log house, even this being framed over. There are a few newer houses, and many of the older ones are well kept. Although many of the farmsteads are large and attractive, there are a few that are small and/or unattractive.

The change from horses to tractors occurred early in this area. In fact, only four of the farmers had used horses since locating here, and these changed to tractor power in the thirties or early forties. One farmer in the western half changed as late as 1947. The emphasis on shopping at the local centre (Wembley is approximately three miles south) is less pronounced in this area, and the large majority of the business is done in Grande Prairie. The farmers of this area are much more mobile than their counterparts in Lymburn.

This is a mature farming area; the land has been occupied for over fifty years and many of the farms have been passed from father to son. This maturity is especially reflected in the east half by spacious fields and large, comfortable farmsteads. The west half is still in a developmental state, with land being brought into production somewhat slowly due to forest cover and moderate to poor soil capability.

B. Lymburn

1. Processes

The first settlers in this township entered in 1916. This was an extension of the settlement around Hythe both from the east and south. Early settlement came slowly in this area, the first minor rush being in 1918 and 1919 when there was a demand for land by veterans returning after the first World War. During these two years twenty-two quarters were filed upon, bringing the total at that time to twenty-eight quarters or 24 per cent of the total available land. Between 1919 and 1926 a few entries were made in almost every year, and the main land rush in this area took place between 1927 and 1930. The reasons for the land rush at this time are broadly the same as those discussed in the previous section. In this period almost 50 per cent of the total available land was taken. It was during this time too that land abandonment became significant. Although four quarters filed upon up until 1926 were abandoned at least once, no less than twenty-eight quarters that had been filed upon between 1927 and 1930 were abandoned at least once. There were no entries filed between 1931 and 1945. Six entries were recorded in 1946 and two in 1949. There are presently eight quarters that are still available Crown land, five of these having been previously abandoned.

In this area, initial settlement came later and with less of a rush than in the Lake Saskatoon area. There was little open land to lure the settler in early as was apparent in the previous areas.

Settlers had few good quarters to choose from so settlement occurred sporadically both in space and time. Moreover there was the lack of any settlement nucleus in the immediate area, although a store and an elevator came later. Lymburn shared in the same 1927-1930 rush that was noticed in Lake Saskatoon, although this rush was more pronounced in the Lymburn area. This was possible due to the fact that more land was available at Lymburn, and to the extension of the railway through the township in 1928-1929. The process of land abandonment was more pronounced here as well. This area rates higher in both the instances of abandonment and the number of quarters abandoned than either of the other areas. Also this is the only area of the three where previously abandoned land is still available for settlement.

An interesting characteristic of the settlement process in this township is the greater past mobility of the farmer. Based on the interviews conducted, of the twenty-eight farmers who indicated they had lived in at least one other location in the Peace, twenty were from the Lymburn township. Lake Saskatoon and Bonanza township accounted for only four farmers each.

2. Patterns

This township is composed of smaller-than-average farms, the average size being 448 acres⁴ compared to 480 acres for the County of Grande Prairie No. 1⁵ in which this study area is located. The

⁴Figures relating to the study areas are based on the interviews conducted.

⁵Census of Canada, 1961.

most significant difference is the average amount of improved acreage per farm however. The County average is 303 acres, while here it is only 216 acres. This difference is emphasized when compared to the figures for the Lake Saskatoon and Bonanza study areas (406 and 429 acres respectively). The combination of little capital and heavy clearing costs have kept the proportion of improved land to total farm area low. In general, this improved land occurs as pockets in the unimproved land and these are scattered sporadically over most of the area. (See Map 7). With the exceptions of two sections in the south-west corner, this township is completely covered by farms.

The farmsteads show little locational pattern with the exception of those on land adjacent to the Beaverlodge River. There was a tendency for both past and present farmsteads to locate near the river, in some cases at the expense of a roadside location. There is a concentration of the farmsteads in the central and west-central portion of the township, and a definite lack of farmsteads in the south-west. This seems to be a direct reflection of the quality of the land, the best being in the central and the poorest in the south-west portions.

Farmsteads are generally unpretentious and only moderately attractive. Houses are usually quite small, one storey frame structures, however, log houses are still common. On nine of the twenty-four farmsteads visited the houses were of log, although two of these had been framed over. There are few new houses in the area, but on the more successful farms the houses are large and well-kept. Outbuildings are often of log construction.

MAP 7



LYMBURN
GENERAL LAND USE — 1961

- | | | | |
|-----------------|---|-----------------------|--|
| Main roads | | Indian reserve | |
| Improved land | | Farmstead | |
| Unimproved land | | Farmstead interviewed | |
| Soil rating | 5 | Farmstead unoccupied | |

Scale
1 0 1 2 miles

Sources: A.R.D.A. Land use inventory
Odynsky *et. al.*, 1961

Mechanization came late to this area, as is witnessed by the sparse and scattered nature of the improved land. Most of the farmers, with the exception of those that recently took over from their fathers, used horses until the fifties. Only one farmer interviewed changed to tractor power before 1945 and one was using horses solely when he retired in 1965. The local stores at Lymburn and Goodfare (2 miles south of the study area) are still quite important as local trade centres, but the majority of business, including all large purchases, is done at Hythe (approximately 6 miles west). Very few of the farmers travel to Grande Prairie (approximately 42 miles) either for business or pleasure. Poor roads and gaps in the road network are indicative of the poorly developed nature of some sections of this township as well.

From the above description, it would seem that this is almost a pioneer or frontier area. In many senses it is. Moderate to poor soil capability, heavy tree cover and the attendant high cost of preparing the land for production, small units of land, and lack of capital have all hindered the development of this area and helped to preserve its frontier nature.

C. Bonanza

1. Processes

This township was opened for homestead entry in 1930. There were a few farmers squatting in the area in 1929, but legal initial settlement took place the following year. There was an immediate response to the opening of this township and by the end of 1930,

almost half of the land had been filed upon. Following the initial burst of settlement, occupation of the land has been fairly even to the present, except during World War II and a few other years in which no entries were made. The last quarter of available Crown land was filed upon in 1965.

Land abandonment has not been of the magnitude of that in the Lymburn area, but almost 17 per cent of the land has been abandoned at least once. Again, most of abandonment took place on land filed on during the early 1930's, but land had been abandoned as recently as 1964. All land at present is either under entry or patented.

2. Patterns

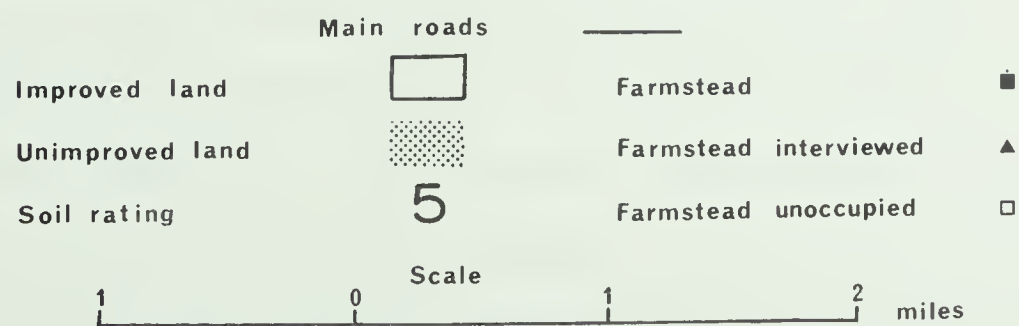
The farms of this area are the largest of the three study areas, and are significantly larger than the average farm in Improvement District 134 in which it is located. (Bonanza - 560 acres; ID134-420 acres). The average amount of improved land per farm is 429 acres. This is higher than the average for I.D. 134 (243 acres) and highest of the study areas, but the percentage of improved land per farm is slightly lower than in the Lake Saskatoon township (76 per cent and 79 per cent respectively).

The majority of land in the west half of this township is improved. The unimproved land in this half occurs as a result of deeply incised streams and areas of poor drainage. A map based on present conditions would show many more pockets of improved land in the south-east corner, and considerable extension of the improved land in the east-central and north-east portions of the township. The entire study area is presently under farm occupation.

MAP 8



BONANZA **GENERAL LAND USE — 1961**



Sources: A.R.D.A. Land use inventory
 Odynsky et. al., 1961

Once again farmsteads vary widely in size and appearance. Those in the more developed areas are generally large and attractive. Exceptions are apparent especially in the former case. Extensive farming with a wheat-clover rotation is dominant in this township and is reflected both by the large fields and the presence of large machine sheds and workshops on the larger farms. There are many houses of two stories, and several modern bungalows. Frame construction is almost universal, but two families are still living in log houses.

The change to tractor power came mainly in the late thirties and early forties, although many farmers have never used horses since moving here. 1947 and 1949 were the latest changes to tractor power, but these are exceptions to the general rule. The store at Bonanza is not important as a trade centre. Almost all business is done at Dawson Creek, British Columbia, although several farmers purchase their fuel supplies at Baytree (eight miles distant), and some buy their machinery at Spirit River (approximately 42 miles east)

In general, this is a prosperous, progressive farming area, and the farmsteads and farming practices reinforce this observation. Active extension of producing cropland is especially evident in the south-east corner, and in most parts of the township an optimistic atmosphere prevails.

Chapter VI

Specific Settlement Factors

In Chapter IV the discussion centered around the factors responsible for the farmer's broad choice of the Peace River region as his home. With the summary of the evolution and patterns of settlement in the three study regions in the previous chapter as background, a consideration of the factors responsible for farm site selection can be undertaken. These factors are those that were given by the farmer as responsible for his location in a particular place in the Peace River region. The dates of entry given in Chapter IV were the dates that the farmer entered the Peace River region. In this section, the dates refer to the time the farmer actually took up residence on his present location. Thus, a farmer may have entered the Peace River region at a relatively early date, but only recently moved to his present location. Where the farmer took over his father's farm, the location date refers to the time that he and his parents moved to that particular location and not to the date of his takeover of the farm.

A. Availability of Land

This factor has already been identified as significant in the farmer's broad choice of the Peace River region as his home. It is also important in the farmer's choice of a specific farm location. In the former instance, availability was a broad positive factor in attracting farmers to the general region. In this section availability is also a positive factor, but the choice of available land

was often so restricted that the availability factor overshadowed other locational considerations such as soil, topography, location, etc. Thus, while a farmer was still aware of the physical and locational features of a particular location, these factors became secondary to the availability of the land. The degree to which availability outweighed other factors in locational choice was directly proportional to the range of choice the prospective farmer had. For example, the farmer who cited this as the dominant factor in location in 1910 had quite a wide range of choice open to him, but the choice was limited by the fact that he needed one section of land in a block. Because of the range of choice, this section of land was located on fairly open land and near a good water supply; the location was made because of availability, but physical attractions had great influence as well. On the other hand, especially during more recent years, the range of choice has been much narrower for farmers. These farmers took what they could get--if there was a choice between several tracts of land, quite often it was the lack of negative features rather than the presence of positive attractions that determined their choice for the good land had already been taken.

Over 35 per cent of the farmers gave this factor as dominant in site choice. It seems to have had influence during the whole range of time in the study areas, but has been much more important in the Lymburn and Bonanza areas. Twenty-four of the twenty-seven farmers citing this factor came from those areas. Not only was this factor relatively more important there than in the Lake Saskatoon area, but it ranked as the single most important factor in determining the farm location (Bonanza - 39 per cent of the farmers; Lymburn - 45 per cent).

In the Lake Saskatoon township, only 16 per cent of the farmers indicated this as the primary location determinant.

It seems that where settlement was relatively recent, or where settlement took place on marginal land (marginal both in the type of land and in costs involved in putting the land into production), it was availability that was the key factor in determining the farm location. On such lands it was the pressure of growth or demand that forced settlement in the first place. In the Bonanza area it was demand that forced the opening of the township for settlement; in the Lymburn area growth forced settlement on less desirable farm locations. In the Lake Saskatoon area however, choices based on more rational factors were the rule. Almost all the farmers interviewed were from the eastern or prairie half of the township where land was open and water was plentiful. This land was settled early because of certain inherent advantages. Those that came later to this area had to have a strong desire to live here because for the most part land prices were higher here than in poorer areas and this fact deterred all but those who had definite reasons for settling here.

B. Farm Inheritance

The second most important factor in farm location was taking over the father's farm. Also included in this category are cases where nearness to the father's location was the important factor. The father's location determined the son's location either on or very near the original location. This factor accounted for the location of 30 per cent of the farmers interviewed, and seemed to operate over the whole range of time and throughout the three study areas. It

was found to be proportionately more significant in the Lake Saskatoon township (37 per cent of the answers) than either the Bonanza (32 per cent) or the Lymburn (24 per cent) townships. It would seem that in the area of good farmland and larger farms the encouragement to remain on the father's farm was greater than on poorer land with smaller farm units. The former locations were more promising of success, and hence the sons were more apt to stay on the same location.

Mention has been made of the fact that availability was the least rational of all the factors that decided specific locations. Perhaps some might argue that continuing on the father's farm is not rational either in that the son is merely following the line of least resistance. While this was no doubt true in some cases, most sons growing up on the farm had to make the decision as to whether taking over the father's farm was the wisest course of action. There may have been conditions that warranted leaving the farm entirely, or in other cases, continuing to farm, but in some other, more desirable location. Remaining on the father's farm was a choice made by weighing the chances of success on the present location against chances of success on another location or in another occupation.

C. Near Relatives

In this category, the choice of location was mainly determined by its nearness to relatives (other than parents). In some cases the present location had been farmed previously by a relative and then sold to the farmer. Although this factor is not especially significant overall (9 per cent of the farmers), in the Lymburn township it ranks third in importance with six of the twenty-nine farmers in that

area giving it as the main locational factor. Although no farmer from the Bonanza area indicated this as a main locational factor, one indicated it was of secondary importance.

D. Physical Factors

The presence of certain physical attributes was the basis for locational choice in this category. These attributes ranged from especially attractive physical features such as soil quality to more neutral qualities, that is, not especially attractive, but having a lesser number of undesirable features. In the latter case, there was choice available but from poorer locations, so the best that could be had was taken.

In two cases in Bonanza, the action of fire in partially clearing the land was given as a locational factor, and in one other case there, no specific reason was given for choice of location, but an overall look at the available land was taken before making a choice. In the other three instances, one in Bonanza and two in Lake Saskatoon, it was the presence of positive physical attractions that determined locational choice: presence of water, more open land in the area, level, heavy soil and few rocks. None of the farmers in the Lymburn area gave answers that fell into this category. In the total range of factors this one ranked fourth, accounting for 8 per cent of the answers given. This is a much lower ranking than one would expect. The answer may be found in the fact that certain minimum physical conditions were so basic to agricultural settlement that the farmer did not regard them as dominant location factors unless they were particularly attractive. Thus this class of factors was probably

more important in site selection than the interviews would suggest. This does not minimize a fact that has been previously mentioned; where there was limited choice of available land, availability tended to outweigh physical factors in farm location.

E. Locational Factors

In this category, advantages of location with respect to other farms, community centres, transportation routes and the like accounted for the choice of location. In the Lake Saskatoon township four farmers indicated this was the reason for their location. Three gave nearness to existing settlement centres as distinct from other farms (Grande Prairie, Lake Saskatoon) as the main factor, and one located with nearness to a highway as the major consideration. The remaining three farmers in this category were from the Bonanza area. All three gave the position of their land to the newly expanding rural settlement as the main locational factor.

F. Other Factors

Low land price was the most common factor in this category with three of the farmers giving this reason for their location. Two of these farmers were from Lymburn and one from Lake Saskatoon. One might wonder at the presence of cheap land being a factor at Lake Saskatoon, but this particular case was from the rougher and poorer west half of the township where land is still relatively cheap. There were various other factors in this category: availability of a Veteran's Land Act quarter to a retiring Army man in the Lake Saskatoon area, and in Bonanza the opportunity to buy the farm on which the farmer was working. One Lymburn farmer who farms from nearby Hythe had no single

reason but indicated that it was a combination of fairly cheap, available land that was close to his home in Hythe that influenced his choice of land.

Table V
Farm Site Selection Factors*

Factor	Lymburn	Bonanza	Lake Saskatoon	Total
Available Land	1927(3), 1929, 1930, 1942, 1945, 1947, 1948(2), 1951, 1952	1929(3), 1930, 1952, 1955, 1957, 1959, 1963(2), 1965	1910, 1948, 1957	26
Inheritance	1927(2), 1929, 1931(2), 1948, 1963	1929(2), 1930, (3), 1931(2), 1933, 1947	1910, 1911, 1926, 1931, 1941, 1958(2)	23
Relatives	1935, 1941, 1950, 1951, 1957, 1962	-	1927	7
Location	-	1929, 1930, 1933	1909, 1926, 1931, 1961	7
Physical	-	1929, 1930(2), 1949	1910, 1963	6
Others	1941, 1945, 1956	1947	1945, 1963	6

*Dates refer to the time the farmer or his parents located on their present site.

Summary

Various factors have influenced the farmer to locate in a certain place. On the basis of the interviews, availability of land was the most common factor cited, followed by inheritance of or location near the father's farm as the prime consideration. Locational advantages of the farm and nearness to relatives were equally common as factors cited, followed by the physical attributes of the location. Other factors were low land prices and the availability of a veterans quarter. While factors have been isolated for individual treatment, it should be recognized that they often acted in combination in influencing a farmer in his choice of a farm location.

Chapter VII

Conclusion

The factors responsible for the movement of farmers to the Peace River region seem to be fairly well distributed over the time span of settlement (1910-1965) and in general, common to all three study areas. Once again, these factors appear to have been: negatively--land cost, national factors, physical factors, and no future; positively--the invitation of the land, advertising, and relatives. Exceptions to the above generalization are the proportionately greater emphasis on the land expense factor at both ends of the time span and the frequency of the national factor in the Lymburn area as contrasted with its absence in the Lake Saskatoon area. The latter area was settled before the demand for land in the south occasioned an influx of immigrants into the Peace region. On the other hand Lymburn was settled at this time (the late twenties and early thirties) and hence has a higher proportion of Europeans. The time of this influx accounts too for the absence of the national factor until the late twenties.

The factors cited as responsible for specific farm location (availability of land, farm inheritance, relatives, physical factors and locational factors) are equally well-distributed over the time of settlement but differences in factors cited from area to area are noticeable. The classification of the study areas in Chapter 5 as "pioneer", "progressive", and "mature" for the Lymburn, Bonanza, and Lake Saskatoon areas respectively can be partially re-enforced by a comparison of the specific factors operating in the three areas.

Those in the Lake Saskatoon area are related more to the actual advantages of the area. The number of sons taking over their father's farms is proportionately higher here and attests both to the maturity and to the quality of the area. The same factors related to the advantages of the area are evident in the Bonanza area with more emphasis on land availability and proportionately less emphasis on farm takeover. This indicates the attractiveness of the area and the recency of settlement. The factors cited in the Lymburn area on the other hand are more concerned with advantages unrelated to the physical or locational aspects of the area e.g. availability of land and nearness to relatives. Factors relating to physical and locational advantages are lacking here. The high past mobility of the farmers of this area also indicate a restless searching for better opportunities in various areas, a basic pioneer attitude.

As a result of this study, certain factors have been identified as influential in determining the farmer's choice of the Peace River region as his home, and in his selection of a specific farm location within this region. It is the opinion of the author that these fairly represent the range of factors responsible for the settlement process, general and specific, in the Peace River region overall. Although they have been ranked as to frequency, and this gives some indication of their relative importance, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to attempt to establish their absolute importance in the settlement process. It is hoped that the factors identified will be useful in future comparative settlement studies.

There is a need for further study in this area both in detail and in breadth. The former would give a clearer insight into the relationships existing between the various factors operating in the settlement process, and the latter would extend the conclusions of this present study.

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Appendix I

Interview Form

Name: _____ Location: _____

Year: _____ From: _____

Route: _____

Experience: _____

Elsewhere in Peace: _____

WHY a) left _____

b) chose Peace _____

c) this location _____

d) moved in Peace _____

Original status a) homestead _____ b) bought _____ c) renting _____

d) other _____

Absences: _____ Why _____

Acreage a) originally _____ b) _____

Improved a) originally _____ b) now _____

Land use now: _____

Major expansion: _____

Major shift production: _____

Labor a) originally _____ b) now _____

Animal/Mechanical a) originally _____ b) now _____

First tractor: _____ First car/truck _____

% income from farm: _____ other sources: _____

Local business center: _____ trips/wk: _____ % spent: _____

Major business center: _____ trips/wk: _____ % spent: _____

Original construction material: _____ When frame: _____

Children: a) No. _____ b) in Peace _____ c) occupations _____

Major hindrance to adequate income: _____

Complaints, disadvantages: a) originally _____

b) now _____

Needs of farmer: a) originally _____

b) now _____

Other comments: _____

Appendix II

Provincial Land Policies After 1930.¹

The administration of Crown land in Alberta was transferred to the government of the province in 1930. Some minor changes in the terms of the homestead policy, and the introduction of cultivation leases were the only changes in policy during the next nine years.

A complete change in policy came on March 24, 1939, when the right to obtain homesteads, second homesteads, and soldier grants was withdrawn. The homestead policy had outlived its usefulness, and on July 25, 1939, a new policy of agricultural or homestead leasing was introduced. These leases ran for a term of twenty years, with the option of purchase after ten years residence and cultivation duties. The application fee was five dollars, the annual payments were on a crop-share basis, the government paid the taxes on the land, and most important, fifty per cent of the land (a quarter section) had to be evaluated as fit for agricultural purposes before a lease would be granted.

A similar, but slightly relaxed version of the above policy was introduced on September 17, 1945, called the Veteran Agricultural or Homestead Lease. As its name implied, it was restricted to war veterans.

In 1947, a modification of the terms of the Agricultural Leases made it possible to obtain title after five years residence and cultivation duties by purchase at the original raw land price. The amount was decreased with increased residence until title was granted without cost after ten years.

¹Information compiled from the Annual Reports, Department of Lands and Mines and Department of Lands and Forests, Government of the Province of Alberta, 1930-1963.

On July 1, 1957, a homestead sales policy was enacted. This allowed for a maximum of 480 acres of land. Five years cultivation duties and the purchase price gave title to the land, and there was no residence duty. In 1966, a modification of this Act allowed farmers to obtain up to a maximum of 640 acres under these terms.

The above outline is not intended to be comprehensive but attempts to give some indication of the major changes in land policy since 1930.

Appendix III

Land Settlement Data¹

Lake Saskatoon, Lymburn and Bonanza

Year	Lake Saskatoon		Lymburn		Bonanza	
	Entries Filed	Entries Canc.	Entries Filed	Entries Canc.	Entries Filed	Entries Canc.
1910	36	-	-	-	-	-
1911	21	-	-	-	-	-
1912	11	-	-	-	-	-
1913	3	-	-	-	-	-
1914	3	-	-	-	-	-
1915	2	-	-	-	-	-
1916	4	-	3	-	-	-
1917	1	-	2	-	-	-
1918	1	-	7	-	-	-
1919	1	-	15	-	-	-
1920	-	-	2	2	-	-
1921	1	-	3	1	-	-
1922	1	-	2	1	-	-
1923	-	-	-	-	-	-
1924	-	-	2	-	-	-
1925	-	-	1	-	-	-
1926	-	-	5	1	-	-
1927	6	1	17	-	-	-
1928	29	1	34	2	-	-
1929	4	2	20	4	-	-
1930	4	1	7	1	71	1
1931	2	2	-	1	4	2
1932	2	1	2	2	5	1
1933	2	1	2	1	2	1
1934	2	1	1	2	4	1
1935	3	3	2	4	-	-
1936	-	-	-	6	-	1
1937	5	2	5	3	3	4
1938	2	2	-	-	5	1
1939	-	1	-	1	2	2
1940	1	-	-	2	-	1
1941	-	2	-	1	-	-
1942	-	-	-	-	-	-
1943	-	-	-	1	-	-
1944	-	1	-	1	-	-
1945	-	1	1	-	-	-
1946	1	-	6	-	4	-
1947	4	-	3	-	7	-
1948	1	1	-	-	3	-
1949	1	-	2	1	4	-
1950	1	1	1	-	14	-

¹Township Registers, Grande Prairie, Alberta.

Year	Lake Saskatoon		Lymburn		Bonanza	
	Entries Filed	Entries Canc.	Entries Filed	Entries Canc.	Entries Filed	Entries Canc.
1951	1	-	1	-	3	3
1952	1	-	1	-	2	-
1953	1	1	-	1	4	2
1954	2	-	1	-	4	-
1955	-	1	-	1	3	3
1956	-	-	-	-	3	3
1957	1	1	-	-	1	-
1958	-	1	1	-	8	-
1959	-	1	-	1	4	1
1960	1	1	1	-	-	-
1961	1	-	2	-	2	4
1962	2	1	-	1	4	2
1963	3	-	2	-	3	3
1964	-	-	3	-	6	3
1965	-	-	1	-	7	-
1966	1	-	-	-	-	-

Note: Each entry or cancellation represents one quarter section or a fraction of a quarter section (as in the case of land adjoining a lake). All entries are recorded--entries on abandoned or cancelled land as well as original entries. Cancellations refer to the number of entries cancelled in that year and not to the cancellation of entries filed on in that year. Hence the apparent discrepancy between figures in Chapter 5 and in this table.

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